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TWENTY TWO

SERMONS

ON

VARIOUS SUBJECTS,

SELECTED FROM THE WORKS

OF

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SERMON I.

The Nativity of our Lord, Tidings of great Joy.

LUKE ii. 10.

And the Angel ſaid unto them, Fear not; for, behold, I bring you tidings of great joy, which ſhall be to all people[a].

THE proper buſineſs of a feſtival is ſpiritual joy, conceived in our hearts, by reflection on ſome notable bleſſing conferred on us; accompanied with a grateful ſenſe and expreſſion, anſwerable to the ſpecial bounty and mercy of God, in due proportion to the nature and degree of that bleſſing. SERM. I.

Such joy is a duty, or a part of religious devotion, required by God, and very acceptable to him: for as God would have his ſervants perpetually content, well ſatisfied, and cheerful in all ſtates, and upon all occurrences; ſo he doth eſpecially demand from us, that we ſhould entertain his favours with delight and complacence; it being proper, it being ſeemly, it being juſt, ſo to do: for ſince joy is a natural reſult of our obtaining whatever we do apprehend 1 Theſſ. v. 16. Rom. xii. 12. Phil. iv. 4.

[a] Ἰδοὺ γὰρ εὐαγγελίζομαι ὑμῖν χαρὰν μεγάλην, ἥτις ἔσται παντὶ τῷ λαῷ.

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SERM. I. good, or esteem and affect; the conception of it is a plain argument, that we do well understand, do rightly prize, do cordially like, do thankfully embrace God's favours; as, on the contrary, a defect of it doth imply, that we do not mind them, or take them to be little worth, that we do not sensibly relish them, or accept them kindly. And if ever we are obliged, if ever we are concerned so to rejoice, then surely it is now; when the fairest occasion and highest cause of joy that ever was is presented to us; when certain news from heaven, and the best that ever came from thence, of the most admirable, the most glorious, the most beneficial event, that ever happened in the world, is in a manner suitably rare conveyed to us; for, *Behold*, saith the Angel, *I bring you tidings of great joy, which shall be to all people.*

Upon which words (each whereof is emphatical, and pregnant with matter observable) we shall first make a brief descant or paraphrase, supplying the room of a curious analysis; then we shall urge the main duty couched in them.

Ἰδού, *Behold:* This is a word denoting *admiration*, exciting *attention*, intimating *assurance: Behold*, and *admire*; it is no mean, no ordinary matter, that I report, but a most remarkable, a very marvellous event: *Behold*, and *attend*; it is a business not to be passed over with small regard, but most worthy your consideration, of high moment and concernment to you. *Behold*, and *see*; it is no uncertain, no obscure thing; but that whereof you may be fully assured, as if it were most evident to your sense, and which by conspicuous proofs shall be demonstrated; in the mean while you have no slight authority for it: For

Εὐαγγελίζομαι, *I bring good tidings*; *I*, an angel, a special messenger of God purposely sent on this errand, that by the strangeness of my apparition I may excite you to regard it, by the weight of my testimony

teſtimony I may incline you to believe it, by the dignity of my nature I may declare the importance of it; *I*, a faithful ſervant of God, and a kind friend to men, very willing at his command to perform good offices to them, do bring a meſſage well becoming an angel's mouth, worth my deſcent from heaven, and putting on this viſible ſhape: for *I bring* SERM. I.

Εὐαγγελίζομαι χαρὰν μεγάλην, *good tidings of great joy:* I bring *tidings*, that may gratify the curioſity of any man, the mind of man naturally being greedy of news: *good tidings*; thoſe are welcome to all men, and apt to yield more pleaſure than any knowledge we had before: tidings *of joy*; ſuch as may not only miniſter a dry ſatisfaction to your reaſon, but ſenſibly touch your affections, by the comfortable nature and beneficial tendency of them: tidings of *great joy*; as not touching any indifferent or petty buſineſs, but affairs of neareſt concernment and higheſt conſequence to you: (ſuch, indeed, as you ſhall underſtand, which do concern not the poor intereſts of this world, not the ſorry pleaſures of ſenſe, not any ſlender advantage of your preſent life and temporal ſtate; but your ſpiritual welfare, your everlaſting condition, the future joy and happineſs of your ſouls;) *tidings*, indeed, the moſt gladſome that ever ſounded upon earth, that ever entered into mortal ear: theſe *I bring*

Ὑμῖν, *to you:* to you *ſhepherds*; perſons of mean condition, and ſimple capacity, leading this innocent and humble ſort of life, employed in your honeſt vocation, undergoing toilſome labour and ſore hardſhip; witneſs the open field, witneſs the cold ſeaſon, witneſs the dark night, in which I find you watching, and guarding your ſheep[b]; to you, who could expect no very welcome tidings; who are little concerned in any great tranſactions, and can have ſmall Luke ii. 8.

[b] Pauperibus atque vigilantibus, &c. *Bern. de Nat. Serm.* 5.

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SERM. I. ambition or hope of bettering your condition by any changes here; even to you (not in the first place to the mighty *princes*, to the crafty *statesmen*, to the sage *philosophers*, or learned *rabbies*, to the wealthy *merchants*, or fine *citizens*, who now are warm in their houses, enjoying their ease and pleasure; reposing on their beds, or sitting by their fires, or revelling at their banquets and sports; but to you) poor, harmless, silly, industrious souls; who well may represent the greater and better part of mankind, in this surprising and absolute free way, the gracious Lord of heaven by me his special minister doth vouchsafe to send from thence *tidings of great joy:* which shall be

Matt. xv. 24. x. 6. Rom. ix. 4. Luke xxiv. 47. Acts xiii. 46. Isa. ii. 3. Zech. ix. 9. Rom. ix. 4.

Παντὶ τῷ λαῷ, *to all people*; or rather to all *the people*; that is to God's ancient and peculiar people, in regard to which it is said, *I was not sent but to the lost sheep of the house of Israel*; to *that* people, I say, especially, primarily, and more immediately this joy did appertain; it, by a closer relation to God, and special interest in his promises, having plainest title thereto; it, from anticipations of knowledge, faith, and hope, being more capable to admit such an overture; it indeed being the representative of all the spiritual Israel, or faithful seed of Abraham, for whom the benefits which these tidings import were designed; to it first indeed, but mediately and consequentially to all people dispersed on the face of the earth. The expression seemeth adapted to the present conceits of that nation, which apprehended nothing about God's favourable intentions to the community of men: but in effect it is to be understood extensively in reference to all people: for the Saviour, the Christ, the Lord, of whom this good news did report, was not only to be the Redeemer and Governor of that small people, but of the world, of every nation, of all mankind: here indeed we have παντὶ τῷ λαῷ, *to all the people*; but in the *nunc dimittis* of old Simeon, we have πάντων τῶν λαῶν, *of all the peoples*;

Luke ii. 31.

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peoples: Mine eyes, ſaid he, *have ſeen thy ſalvation, which thou haſt prepared before the face of the peoples:* As he was *the glory of his people Iſrael*; as in him *God did viſit and redeem that his people*; ſo he was *made a light to lighten the Gentiles, and to be for ſalvation to the uttermoſt ends of the earth:* he was *the expectation of Iſrael*; but he was likewiſe *the deſire of all nations:* he was deſtined *to rule in Sion*; but *the Heathen* alſo *were given for his inheritance, and the uttermoſt parts of the earth for his poſſeſſion:* he was *the root of Jeſſe, which ſhould ſtand for an enſign of the people, to which the Gentiles ſhould ſeek*; he was that *royal Perſon*, of whom the Pſalmiſt did ſing, *men ſhall be bleſſed in him, all nations ſhall call him bleſſed.*

SERM. I.

Luke i. 68. ii. 32. Acts xiii. 47. Iſa. xlix. 6. xlii. 6. Luke ii. 38. Hag. ii. 7. Pſal. ii. 8. Mic. v. 2. Iſa. xi. 10. Pſal. lxxii. 17.

He was to be born by nation a *Jew*, but a man by nature; *the Son of man*, was a ſtyle which he commonly did own and affect, no leſs than the *Son of Abraham*, or of *David*; he was *born* indeed *under the law*, but *of a woman*; and therefore brother to us all, as *partaker of the ſame fleſh and blood:* hence was he endued with an human compaſſion, and with a fraternal affection toward all men; hence was he diſpoſed to extend the benefit of his charitable and gracious performances unto them all.

Gal. iv. 4. Heb. ii. 14.

Judea therefore muſt not engroſs this angelical Goſpel; it is of importance moſt univerſal and unlimited, reaching through all ſucceſſions of time, and all extenſions of place; filling all ages and regions of the world with matter and with obligation of joy: hence even by Moſes anciently (according to St. Paul's interpretation) were all nations upon this account invited to a common joy; *Rejoice*, ſaid he, *O ye nations with his people.* Hence, in foreſight of this event, the holy Pſalmiſt (as the Fathers expound him[c]) did ſing, *The Lord reigneth, let the earth rejoice,*

Rom. xv. 10. Deut. xxxii. 43. Pſal. xcvii. 1. xcvi. 1.

[c] Τὴν προτέρων τῦ σωτῆρος ἐπιφάνειαν προλέγει.
Totum ad Chriſtum revocemus, ſi volumus iter rectæ intelligentiæ tenere. *Aug. in Pſ.* xcvi. 7.

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SERM. I. *let the multitude of iſles be glad thereof:* hence *Sing, O thou barren, thou that didſt not bear, break forth into ſinging and cry aloud, thou that didſt not travail with child—The wilderneſs and the ſolitary place ſhall be glad, the deſart ſhall rejoice and bloſſom as the roſe—Sing unto the Lord a new ſong, and his praiſe from the end of the earth*, ſaid the Evangelical Prophet in regard to this diſpenſation: in fine, this Angel himſelf did interpret his own words, when in concert with the heavenly choir he ſang that anthem, *Glory be to God in the higheſt; on earth peace, and good will toward men:* whence we may collect that a peace diffuſed over the earth, and a good will extended toward all men, were implied in theſe *tidings of great joy to all people.*

Iſa. liv. 1. xxxv. 1. xlii. 10.

Luke ii. 14.

We then are all concerned in theſe *tidings*, and we may look on them as by this heavenly Evangeliſt imparted to us; whence our duty muſt be to liſten with reverent attention unto them, ſeriouſly to weigh the purport of them, diligently to contemplate the reaſons of that great joy, which effectually ſhould be produced in us by them, as their proper and due reſult; to further which practice, let us take ſome proſpect of this Goſpel, whereby it may appear pleaſant, and apt to kindle a ſprightly joy in our hearts. The matter of it is the *nativity* of our *ever bleſſed Lord* and *Saviour Jeſus Chriſt*; for, *To you*, ſaith our Angel, *is born this day a Saviour, who is Chriſt the Lord*; an occurrence fraught with all the greateſt cauſes of joy imaginable; as importing innumerable, inexpreſſibly and inconceivably vaſt advantages thence ſpringing to us.

It doth miniſter occaſion of rejoicing for all the bleſſings, which did flow from each of his ſalutary undertakings and performances; for all the mercies purchaſed by the merits of his obedience, and by the price of his blood; for all the graces iſſuing from his diſpenſation of the Holy Spirit; for all the benefits conſequent on his illuſtrious reſurrection, aſcenſion,

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ascension, and glorification; as being a good entrance to them, yea, a great progress in them, and a certain pledge of their full accomplishment: for all the work of our redemption was in a manner achieved, when our Saviour did appear; his incarnation was the great step toward it, as being an act of the humblest obedience, and of the highest merit, that could any wise be performed, for satisfying the justice of God, and winning his favour toward us. His *taking up life* may well seem more meritorious than his *laying it down*, and the chief passion which he could ever undergo; his death was a passion, great as death could be; his life also was a continual passion, or exercise of huge patience: but his birth seemeth to be the greatest and strangest passion of all; involving the lowest submission and the deepest suffering. What nobler sacrifice could there be, than God's offering himself up to mortality, to infirmity, to slavery? What obedience can be thought of comparable to that which he did express, when he said, *Lo, I come to do thy will, O God: I came down, not that I might do my own will, but the will of him that sent me.* For him to descend from heaven, the region of light and bliss, into this gloomy and sad world; for him in a manner to divest himself of celestial majesty, and to assume the form of a servant; for him to be inclosed in a womb, and to come out wailing thence, to suck at a breast for life, to be carried in arms, and laid in a manger, to enter on a stage of *being* so very low and homely; for him, I say, *the Lord of glory*, thus *to empty* and *abase* himself[d]; may not this reasonably be deemed more than, after his becoming man, to sustain all the grievances incident to our nature and state? Whence *the very assumption of flesh was* (saith St. Athanasius) *the redemption of all mankind*[e]. He was at least thence en-

SERM. I.

Heb. x. 7. John vi. 38.

Phil. ii. 7, 8.

[d] Ἑαυτὸν ἐκένωσεν, ἑαυτὸν ἐταπείνωσεν.

[e] Ἡ πρόσληψις τ᾽ σαρκὸς ἐλευθέρωσις ἦν πάσης τ᾽ ἀνθρωπότητος. *Ath. Or.* 3. c. *Arr.* p. 385. vid. p. 618.

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SERM. I. gaged in the way of acting and ſuffering whatever was needful for our recovery; and having gone ſo far, aſſuredly he never would flinch or recoil, but would go through with all; being come, he would ſhew himſelf come to purpoſe, leaving no part unfiniſhed of his grand deſign.

So that as they, who celebrate the birth of a prince, do mean thereby to expreſs their joy for all the good, which they do hopefully preſume to enjoy from his protection and conduct afterward in all his life; and as they, who welcome the ſun riſing, do imply their ſatisfaction in the conveniencies of his light through the whole enſuing day; ſo may the *nativity* of our *Lord* afford matter of rejoicing for all the train of mighty bleſſings, which do ſucceed it. We may therefore now well conſider him born to inſtruct us by his excellent doctrine, and to guide us by his perfect example; born to merit God's mercy and favour toward us, by an entire ſubmiſſion to God's pleaſure, in the whole conduct of his life, and in the final reſignation of it; born to renew and ſanctify our nature, to ſupport and ſtrengthen us in obedience to God's commandments, to ſuccour us in temptations, to comfort us in diſtreſſes by his grace; born to rear himſelf from the grave for confirming our faith, and enſuring our hopes of ſalvation; born to aſcend up above all the heavens to God's right hand, there effectually to intercede for us, thence liberally to diſpenſe all heavenly bleſſings to us. Well may we now rejoice, as ſeeing him come to diſcloſe the way of happineſs, to eſtabliſh the covenant of grace, to void all the obſtructions, and ſubdue all the enemies to our welfare: well may we celebrate this *birth*, as by its virtue bleſſing the Patriarchs, enlightening the Prophets, inſpiring the Mar-

Λύχνον ἦψε τὴν ἑαυτῦ σάρκα, &c. *Greg. Naz. Or.* 38.
Creatoris ad creaturam deſcenſio credentium eſt ad æterna provectio. *Leo M. de Nat. Serm.* 5.

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tyrs with faith and courage, endowing all the Saints, SERM. that ever have been, with grace, and crowning them with glory; so that in this *day* we have the *passion*, the *pasch*, the *ascension*, the *pentecost*, the *memorials* of every *saint* suggested to us [f]; the joys of all our *festivals* do conspire or commence in this; which is the head and spring, which is the fruitful seed, which is the hopeful morning of them all. Πάντα ταῦτα τῆς παρούσης ἡμέρας χάρις ἐστιν· αὕτη γὰρ ἦρξη τῶν ἐφεξῆς ἀγαθῶν. *All these things* (saith St. Gregory Nyssen) *are the grace of this present day, for it began the goods which did in order succeed.* Greg. Nyss. tom. ii. p. 784.

1.

But waving the numberless benefits so consequent on the *nativity*, we shall only touch some of those which have a more formal and close relation thereto.

I pass over the contemplation of that sweet harmony between the old and the new world; in which, to our comfortable satisfaction, the sweetest attributes of God (his goodness, his wisdom, his fidelity and constancy) do illustrate themselves, by completion of the ancient promises, prefigurations, and predictions touching this event.

I forbear also to reflect on the happy alteration and amendment of the world, which our Lord's coming did induce, by comparing the state of things before it, with that which followed it; the consideration of which case is very pleasant, and productive of joy. First then,

1. Let us consider, that the *nativity* doth import the completion of many ancient promises, predictions, and prefigurations concerning it; that whereas all former dispensations of favour and mercy were as preludes or preambles to this; the *old Law* did aim to represent it in its mysterious pomps; the chief of providential occurrences did intimate it; the Prophets often in their mystical raptures did allude to

[f] Οἰκεῖον γὰ τὰ τῦ Πάσχα καλὰ τῶν περὶ τὴν γένεσιν εὐφημιῶν μέρος ἐστι. *Greg. Nyss.*

it,

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SERM. I. it, and often in clear terms did expreſs it [g]; the gracious deſigns of God, and the longing expectations of mankind being ſo variouſly implied in regard thereto; now all is come to be fulfilled, and perfected in moſt clear, moſt effectual, moſt ſubſtantial accompliſhment: now is ſprung up that *ſeed of the woman*, which, according to the firſt Goſpel preached to Abraham, ſhould *bruiſe the ſerpent's head*; now is the myſtical Iſaac, the miraculous *Son of promiſe*, born; now is that grant to Abraham, *In thy ſeed ſhall all the nations of the earth be bleſſed*, made good; now is *Shiloh come*, of whom Jacob foreboded, *unto him the gatherings of the people ſhall be*; now is that oracle of Moſes more than verified, *A prophet ſhall the Lord your God raiſe up unto you of your brethren, like to me; him ſhall ye hear*; now *the ſtar is come out of Jacob*, the viſion whereof dazzled Balaam, and ſtopped him from curſing that people, in which it ſhould ariſe; now is that oath diſcharged to David, *Of the fruit of thy body will I ſet upon thy throne*; now thoſe illuſtrious predictions of Iſaiah, *There ſhall come forth a Rod out of the ſtem of Jeſſe—A Virgin ſhall conceive, and bear a ſon; to us a child is born, to us a ſon is given; and the government ſhall be on his ſhoulders—There ſhall come out of Sion the deliverer, and ſhall turn ungodlineſs from Jacob*, are fully accompliſhed: now *the righteous Branch* (of which Jeremiah and Zechariah ſpake) is ſprouted forth; and Ezekiel's *One Shepherd*, Daniel's *Son of man, coming with the clouds of heaven*; Micah's *Ruler in Iſrael, whoſe goings forth have been from old*; Haggai's *Deſire of all nations*; Malachi's *Angel of the Covenant*, and *Sun of Righteouſneſs* have all in truth appeared: now is that glorious *King* and *Captain* arrived, whom the holy Oracles do ſo magnificently de-

Gen. iii. 15. xxii. 18. Gal. iii. 8, 16. Gen. xlix. 10. Deut. xviii. 15. Acts iii. 22. vii. 37. Num. xxiv. 17. Pſ. cxxxii. 11. Luke i. 33. Iſ. xi. 1. vii. 14. ix. 6. lix. 20. Rom. xi. 26. Jer. xxiii. 5. xxxiii. 15. Zech. iii. 8. vi. 12. Ezek. xxxiv. 23. xxxvii. 24. Dan. vii. 13. Mic. v. 2. Matt. ii. 6. Hag. ii. 7. Mal. iii. 1. iv. 2.

[g] Sapientia et benignitas Dei ac ſalutiferi operis mora capaciores nos ſuæ vocationis effecit, ut quod multis ſignis, multis vocibus, multiſque myſteriis per tot fuerat ſecula pronunciatum, in his diebus Evangelii non eſſet ambiguum, &c. *Leo P. de Nat. Serm.* 3.

ſcribe;

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ſcribe; whom Moſes and Joſhua, whom David and Solomon in ſo many pat circumſtances did foreſhadow; whom God would *ſet upon his holy hill of Sion*; *the ſcepter of whoſe kingdom is a mighty ſcepter*; who ſhould *raiſe the tabernacle of Dævid that is fallen*; *before whom all Kings ſhould fall down, and whom all nations ſhould ſerve*; who *ſhould reign over the houſe of Jacob for ever, and of whoſe kingdom there ſhall be no end.* SERM. I.

Pſ. ii. 6. xlv. 6. lxxii. 11. Acts. xv. 16. Am. ix. 11. Luke i. 33. Dan. vii. 13. Mic. iv. 7. Aug. in Pſ. xcvi.

Now what can be more delightful, or ſatisfactory to our mind, than to reflect on this ſweet harmony of things, this goodly correſpondence between the old and new world; wherein ſo pregnant evidences of God's chief attributes (of his goodneſs, of his wiſdom, of his fidelity and conſtancy) all conſpiring to our benefit, do ſhine? Is it not pleaſant to contemplate how provident God hath ever been for our welfare? what trains from the world's beginning, or ever ſince our unhappy fall, he hath been laying to repair and reſtore us? how wiſely he hath ordered all diſpenſations with a convenient reference and tendency to this maſterpiece of grace [h]? how ſteady he hath been in proſecuting his deſigns, and how faithful in accompliſhing his promiſes concerning it?

If the *holy Patriarchs did ſee this day, and were glad*; if a glimpſe thereof did cauſe their hearts **to leap* within them; if its very dawn had on the ſpirits of the Prophets ſo vigorous an influence [i], what comfort and complacence ſhould we feel in this its real preſence, and bright aſpect on us! How ſenſibly ſhould we be affected with this our happy advantage above them; the which our Lord himſelf then did teach

Joh. viii. 56.

* Ἠγαλλιάσατο.

[h] Non itaque novo conſilio Deus rebus humanis, nec ſera miſeratione conſuluit, ſed a conſtitutione mundi unam eandemque omnibus cauſam ſalutis inſtituit. *Leo P. de Nat. Serm.* 3.

[i] Magnam enim jucunditatem tunc carpebant ipſi ſancti Prophetæ, cum ea videbant in ſpiritu, non jam impleta, ſed adhuc futura. *Aug. in Pſ.* xcvi.

us

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SERM. I. us to estimate duly, when he said, *Blessed are your eyes, for they see; and your ears, for they hear: for verily I say unto you, that many prophets and righteous men have desired to see those things which ye see, and have not seen them; and to hear those things which ye hear, and have not heard them.*

Matt. xiii. 16, 17.

2. Let us consider what alteration our Lord's coming did induce, by comparing the state of things before it to that which followed it. The old world then consisting of two parts, severed by a strong wall of partition, made up of difference in opinion, in practice, in affection, together with a strict prohibition to one of holding intercourse with the other.

Eph. ii. 14.

Acts x. 28.

Of one, and that far the greater part, St. Paul hath given us these descriptions and characters: *They were aliens from the commonwealth of Israel, and strangers from the covenant, having no hope, and being without God in the world*; they were *by nature the children of wrath, and of disobedience*; they were *dead in trespasses and sins, walking according to the course of this world, according to the Prince of the power of the air, the Spirit that worketh in the children of disobedience*; they did *walk in the vanity of their mind, having their understanding darkened, being alienated from the life of God, through the ignorance that was in them, because of the blindness of their heart; and being past feeling, did give themselves over unto lasciviousness, to work all uncleanness with greediness*; they *had their conversation in the lusts of the flesh, fulfilling the desires of the flesh, and of the mind*; being *foolish, disobedient, deceived, serving divers lusts and pleasures, living in malice and envy, hateful, and hating one another*. Such was the case, the dismally wretched case, of the Gentile world; such were our forefathers, (such after them of course, by fatal consequence, should we have been,) they were in their minds blinded with gross ignorance, and deluded with foul errors; they were in their wills and affections corrupted with great disorder, perverseness, sensuality, malice; they did in their

Eph. ii. 12.

Eph. ii. 3. ii. 1, 2.

Eph. iv. 17—19.

Eph. ii. 3.

Tit. iii. 3. Col. iii. 7. (Eph. v. 8. Col. ii. 13.

1 Cor. vi. 11.

2 Cor. iv. 4. 1 Thess. iv. 5.

1 Pet. iv. 3. Gal. iv. 8. Rom. i. 29.)

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their converſation practiſe all ſorts of impiety, iniquity, and impurity; their conceptions of God were very unworthy, and their worſhip anſwerably ſuch; (full of ſottiſh, ſavage, beaſtly ſuperſtitions;) their principles were vain, and their life conformably diſſolute; in ſhort, they lived under the domination and influence of wicked ſpirits, who thence are ſtyled *lords* and *princes of this world, of this air, of this ſecular darkneſs*: even of the wiſeſt among them, (the number of whom, notwithſtanding the clatter their writings made, was very ſmall and inconſiderable,) of thoſe who by the conduct of natural light ſtrove to diſengage themſelves from vulgar miſtakes and miſcarriages, the caſe was little better; for even their minds (after all their ſtudious diſquiſitions and debates) proved dark and giddy; full of ignorance, of error, of doubt in regard to the main points of religion, and of morality; ſome of them flatly denying the exiſtence, or (which in effect is the ſame) the providence of God; the natural diſtinction between good and evil, the ſpiritual nature and future ſubſiſtence of our ſouls, the diſpenſation of rewards and puniſhments after this life; others wavering in doubt, or having but faint perſuaſions about theſe matters; few or none having clear notions, or ſteady opinions about any ſuch things; whence their practice, in correſpondence to their rules, muſt needs have been very looſe, or very lame; ſo that well might our Apoſtle ſay of them, *They became vain in their reaſonings, and their fooliſh heart was darkened; profeſſing themſelves wiſe, they became fools; and as they did not like to retain God in their knowledge, God gave them over to a reprobate mind, to do thoſe things which are not convenient.*

SERM. I.

Eph. vi. 12. ii. 2. (John xii. 31. xiv. 30. xvi. 11. 2 Cor. iv. 4. 2 Tim. ii. 26. Col. i. 13. ii. 15. Acts xxvi. 18.)

Διαλογισμοῖς. Rom. i. 21—28.

As for the other part, or little parcel of men, the condition of that was alſo very low: if the reſt of the world did lie in dark night, they did live but in a duſky twilight; their religion was much wrapt up in ſhadow and myſtery; they had but dilute *ideas* of

Col. ii. 17. Heb. viii. 5. x. 1.

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SERM. I. of God's nature, and ſcant diſcoveries of his will; their law or rule of practice in divers reſpects was defective and infirm; they were locked under the diſcipline of childiſh rudiments, ſuiting their raw capacities, and under the bondage of ſlaviſh yokes, befitting their ſtubborn diſpoſitions; which defailances in notion their practice commonly did outſtrip; being fond, corrupt, hypocritical, void of interior, ſubſtantial and genuine righteouſneſs; as the old Prophets did often complain, and as our Lord, with his Apoſtles, did urge.

Such was the ſtate of the world in its parts, and jointly of the whole it may be ſaid, that it was *ſhut up under ſin* and guilt, under darkneſs and weakneſs, under death and corruption, under ſorrow and woe: that no full declaration of God's pleaſure, no clear overture of mercy, no expreſs grant of ſpiritual aid, no certain redemption from the filth or the force of ſin, from the ſtroke of death, from due puniſhment hereafter; no encouragements ſuitable to high devotion, or ſtrict virtue, were any wiſe in a ſolemn way exhibited or diſpenſed before our Lord's appearance: ſo that well might all men be then repreſented as Cimmerians, *ſitting in darkneſs, in the region and ſhadow of death*; well may we ſuppoſe all ages foregoing to have teemed with hope and deſire of this happy day; or that (as St. Paul ſaith) *the whole creation* (that is, all mankind) *groaneth together, and travaileth together until now*; as labouring with pangs of implicit deſire, or under a painful ſenſe of needing a Saviour; well might Iſaiah thus proclaim his coming; *Ariſe, ſhine, for thy light is come, and the glory of the Lord is riſen upon thee: for behold darkneſs ſhall cover the land, and groſs darkneſs the people; but the Lord ſhall ariſe upon thee, and his glory ſhall be ſeen upon thee; and the Gentiles ſhall come to thy light, and kings to the brightneſs of thy riſing:* for, now, *the Lord hath made known his ſalvation, his righteouſneſs hath he openly ſhewed in the ſight of the heathen. The*

Gal. iii. 22. Rom. xi. 32. iii. 9. 19.

Iſa. ix. 1. Matt. iv. 15, 16.

Rom. viii. 22.

Iſa. lx. 1, 2, 3.

Pſal. xcviii. 2.

Lord

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Lord hath made bare his holy arm in the eyes of all the nations, and all the ends of the earth do see the salvation of our God. SERM. I.

Now *we are all children of the light, and of the day*; all *do know God from the least to the greatest*; the rarest, the deepest notions are grown common and obvious; every child is instructed in the highest truths, every peasant is become a great philosopher, (beyond Aristotle, or Plato, or Epictetus,) skilful of the best knowledge, able to direct his life in the best way, capable of obtaining the best good. 1 Thess. v. 5. (2 Cor. iii. 18. iv. 6.) Heb. viii. 11. Jer. xxxi. 34.

Now the spirit of God (the spirit of direction, of succour, of comfort spiritual,) is poured upon all flesh. *Now the grace of God, that bringeth salvation, hath appeared to all men*; fully instructing them in their duty, and strongly enabling them to perform it, freely offering them mercy, mightily encouraging them with hopes of most blessed rewards. Acts ii. 17. Joel ii. 28. Tit. ii. 11. Luke xxiv. 47.

Now Jew and Gentile are reunited and compacted in one body; walking in the same light, and under obligation to the same laws; sharing in a common redemption and inheritance; being inseparably linked together with the bands of faith, of charity, of spiritual fraternity; thus *old things are passed away, behold all things are become new*, in virtue and consequence of our Lord's appearance: in contemplation of which so great, so general, so happy a change, how can we forbear to rejoice? Eph. iii. 6. ii. 15. 2 Cor. v. 17. Διάρθωσις. Heb. ix. 10.

But farther, that we may yet more nearly touch the point,

3. Let us consider that the nativity of our Lord is a grand instance, a pregnant evidence, a *rich* earnest of Almighty God's very great affection and benignity toward mankind: for, *In this* (saith St. John) *the love of God was manifested, that God sent his only begotten Son into the world*; and, *Through the tender mercies of our God* (sang old Zechariah) *the day-spring from on high did visit us*: this indeed is the peculiar experiment, wherein that most divine attribute did 1 John iv. 9. John iii. 16, 17. Eph. ii. 4. Luke i. 78.

shew

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SERM. I. shew and signalize itself. The power of God doth brightly shine in the creation, the wisdom of God may clearly be discerned in the government of things: but the incarnation of God is that work, is that dispensation of grace, wherein the divine goodness doth most conspicuously display itself: how indeed possibly could God have demonstrated a greater excess of kindness toward us, than by thus for our sake and good sending his dearest Son out of his bosom into this sordid and servile estate, subjecting him to all the infirmities of our frail nature, exposing him to the worst inconveniencies of our low condition[k]? What expressions can signify, what comparisons can set out the stupendous vastness of this kindness? If we should imagine, that a great prince should put his only son (a son most lovely, and worthily most beloved) into rags, should dismiss him from his court, should yield him up into the hardest slavery, merely to the intent that he thereby might redeem from captivity the meanest and basest of his subjects, how faint a resemblance would this be of that immense goodness, of that incomparable mercy, which in this instance the King of all the world hath declared toward us his poor vassals, his indeed unworthy rebels!

Psal. xxxvi. 6. cviii. 4.

And what greater reason of joy can there be, than such an assurance of his love, on whose love all our good dependeth, in whose love all our felicity consisteth? What can be more delightful than to view the face of our Almighty Lord so graciously smiling upon us?

[k] Apparuerat ante potentia in rerum creatione, apparebat sapientia in earum gubernatione; sed benignitas misericordiæ nunc maxime apparuit in humanitate. *Bern. de Nat. Serm.* 1.

Semper quidem diversis modis, multisque mensuris humano generi bonitas divina consuluit, et plurima providentiæ suæ munera omnibus retro seculis clementer impertiit; sed in novissimis temporibus omnem abundantiam solitæ benignitatis exceffit; quando in Christo ipsa ad peccatores misericordia, ipsa ad errantes veritas, ipsa ad mortuos vita descendit, &c. *P. Leo M. de Nat. Serm.* 4.

Should

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SERM. I.

Should we not be extremely glad, ſhould we not be proud, if our earthly prince by any ſignal mark would expreſs himſelf kindly affected to us? How much more ſhould we reſent ſuch a teſtimony of God's favour! how worthily may our ſouls be tranſported with a ſenſe of ſuch affection!

4. We may conſider our Lord's nativity, as not only expreſſing ſimple good will, but implying a perfect reconciliation, a firm peace, a ſteady friendſhip eſtabliſhed between God and us; or that it did not only proceed from love, but did alſo produce love to us. We did ſtand at a great diſtance, in eſtrangement, yea in enmity toward God; our firſt parents had by preſumptuous diſobedience revolted from him; and we, inſiſting on the footſteps of their apoſtaſy, continued in *defiance of him*; *All men had ſinned, and fallen ſhort of the glory of God—There was not a righteous man upon earth, that did good, and ſinned not:* whence unavoidably the wrath of the moſt holy God was incenſed, the juſtice of the moſt righteous Lord was engaged againſt us; thence did iſſue a ſad doom, thence a juſt ſentence of capital puniſhment was denounced on us; no pretence of favour, no overture of peace, no hope of redreſs did then appear; we nowiſe being able to expunge our guilt, to repair our offences, to recover out of that corruption in mind and will, which did ſeal us up to ruin, indiſpoſing us either to find, or to entertain mercy: but our Lord's coming did appeaſe that anger, did mollify that juſtice, did ſuſpend that condemnation, did cloſe the breach, and *ſlay the enmity*; *God* (as the Apoſtle ſpeaketh) *ſending his Son in the likeneſs of ſinful fleſh, and for ſin did condemn ſin in the fleſh*[1]: for, how

Rom. iii. 24. ix. 23. Gal. iii. 22. Eccl. vii. 20. Leo de Nat. Serm. 2.

Eph. ii. 15, 16. Ro. viii. 3. 2 Cor. v. 19.

[1] Ἀδύνατον γίγνει τῇ φύσει λογικῇ ὕσῃ, καὶ ἑκουσίως ἁμαρτησάσῃ, καὶ ἐτὸ καταδίκην θανάτε γινομένῃ, ἑαυτὴν ἀνακαλίσασθαι εἰς ἐλευθερίαν. *Ath.* p. 638.

Ἀδύνατον ἑτέρως τὸ καθαρὸν καὶ ἀναμάρτητον ἐπ' ἀνθρωπίνης φύσεως παραδεχθῆναι, εἰ μὴ θεὸς ἦν σαρκὶ πιστεύοιτο εἶναι, ὁ τὴν ἀναμάρτητον δικαιοσύνην εἰς κόσμον εἰσαγαγὼν, &c. *Ath. de Incarn. Verbi.*

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SERM. I.

can God now avert his face from us, whom his only dear Son hath vouchſafed to make and own for his brethren? How can he look with an eye of diſpleaſure on that nature, wherewith that Son of his love ſtandeth clothed before him? How can he abide offended with our race, in which pure innocence and perfect obedience are found[m]; he now appearing with us, and for us, in whom not the ſtricteſt juſtice nor the ſhrewdeſt malice can deſcry any fault or blemiſh; *in whom* therefore *God is* thoroughly *well-pleaſed?* Since we have *Emanuel, God with us,—God manifeſted in our fleſh—The Lord our righteouſneſs,* partaker of our infirmity, interceſſor and advocate for his own fleſh and blood, ready to do and ſuffer whatever God pleaſeth to require on our behalf, how can God be againſt us? Shall God and man perſiſt at diſtance or diſaffection, who are ſo cloſely related, who are indeed ſo intimately united in one perſon? Shall heaven and earth retain enmity, which have ſo kindly embraced and kiſſed each other; ſince *truth hath ſprouted from the earth, and righteouſneſs hath looked down from heaven?* Shall the war go on, when the great Mediator and umpire of peace is *come*; *preaching peace to them that are afar off, and to them that are near?* Can death any longer reign over us, or our diſgrace and miſery continue, now that *the Prince of life, the Lord of glory, the Captain of ſalvation* doth appear for our relief?

(1 Pet. i. 19. Heb. vii. 26.) John xiv. 30.—ἐν ἐμοὶ οὐκ ἔχει οὐδέν. John xix. 6.—ἐκ τοῦτον εὑρίσκω ἐν αὐτῷ αἰτίαν. Matt. iii. 17. 1 Tim. iii. 16. Jer. xxiii. 6. xxxiii. 16. Pſal. lxxxv. 11. Iſa. ix. 6. Acts x. 36. Eph. ii. 17. 1 Cor. ii. 8.

Now then what can be more worthy of joy, than ſuch a bleſſed turn of affairs? How can we otherwiſe than with exceeding gladneſs ſolemnize ſuch a peace? a peace accorded with him, who in forces ſo infinitely doth overmatch us; who at his pleaſure

[m] Τὸ τῷ Ἀδὰμ σύμπτωμα εἰ; ἀσύγκριτον ἀνάστημα Χριστὸς ἀνεστήσατο, ἐν ὁμοιώματι σαρκὸς ἁμαρτίας ὀφθείς, καὶ κατακρίνας τὴν ἁμαρτίαν ἐν τῇ σαρκί. *Ath.* p. 620.

Εἰ ὃ μὴ ἐν τῇ ἁμαρτησάσῃ φύσει ἡ ἀναμαρτησία ὤφθη, πῶς κατεκρίθη ἡ ἁμαρτία ἐν τῇ σαρκί; *Id.* p. 368.

can

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can utterly quell us; who with the greateſt eaſe, with leſs than a word of his mouth, can daſh us to nothing, or hurl us down into an abyſs of remedileſs woe: how can we avoid being extremely ſatisfied at the recovery of his favour and friendſhip, which alone can be the foundation of our ſafety and welfare, which is the ſole fountain of all good, of all comfort, of all felicity? SERM. I.

5. Our Lord's nativity doth infer a great honour, and a high preferment to us: nowiſe indeed could mankind be ſo dignified, or our nature ſo advanced as hereby: no wiſdom can deviſe a way beyond this, whereby God ſhould honour his moſt ſpecial favourites, or promote them to a nearneſs unto himſelf. For hence we become allied to God in a moſt ſtrait affinity, his eternal Son being made our brother: hence as touching the blood-royal of heaven we do in dignity o'ertop all the creation; ſo that what the Pſalmiſt uttered concerning man is verified in the moſt comprehenſive ſenſe; *Thou haſt crowned him with glory and honour, and haſt ſet him over the works of thy hands; thou haſt put all things in ſubjection under his feet:* for now the Son of man, being alſo the Son of God, is *the head of all principality and power*, is *the Lord of all things*, is the ſovereign Prince of all the world, is placed *far above all principality, and power, and might, and dominion, and every name that is named, not only in this world, but alſo in that which is to come.* This is a peculiar honour, to which the higheſt angels cannot pretend; for *he took not the nature of angels, but he took the ſeed of Abraham*; whence thoſe noble creatures are become in a manner inferior to poor us; and, according to juſt obligation, willingly to adore our nature; for, *when God brought his firſt begotten Son into the world, he ſaid, Let all the angels of God worſhip him:* is not indeed our fleſh become adorable, as the true Shechinah, as the everlaſting palace of the ſupreme Majeſty, *wherein the fulneſs of the Godhead dwelleth bodily*; as the moſt holy ſhrine

Eph. iii. 10, 19.

Ἡνωμένη πατρὶ κατὰ πνεῦμα, ἡμεῖν δὲ κατὰ σάρκα. Ath. p. 612.)

Pſal. viii. 5, 6. Heb. ii. 7, 8.

Col. ii. 10. Eph. ii. 22. Acts x. 36. Eph. i. 21. Phil. ii. 9. 1 Pet. iii. 22.

Heb. ii. 16.

Heb. i. 6. Ἡ σὰρξ ἐθεοποιήθη.

Ath. p. 597. Col. ii. 9. Totum corpus implet tota divinitas. *Leo de Nat. Serm.* 10.

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SERM. I. of the Divinity; as the orb of *inacceſſible light*; as more than all this, if more could be expreſſed, or if we could expound that text, *the word was made fleſh,* John i. 14. iii. 34. *and dwelt in us?* May not our ſoul worthily claim the higheſt reſpect, all whoſe faculties (being endued with unmeaſurable participations of the holy Spirit) have been tuned to a perfect harmony with the all-wiſe underſtanding and the moſt pure will of God? yea, which hath been admitted into the neareſt conſortſhip, into the ſtricteſt union with the eternal word; hath become an ingredient of him, 1 Cor. i. 24. who is *the wiſdom and the power of God?* It was a great dignity that man ſhould be made according to the image of God; but it is a more ſublime glory, that God ſhould be made after the image of man, Heb. ii. 17. κατὰ πάντα ὁμοιωθῆναι, *being made like to us in all things*, bating only ſin, which is no part of us, but an unnatural excreſcence, or a deflection from our nature[n]: how could we be ſo raiſed up to God, as by his thus ſtooping down to us? What can be imagined more honourable to us, than that God ſhould deem us worthy of ſuch condeſcenſion? This, this indeed is our exaltation, that God for us ſhould expreſs not only ſo vaſt charity, but ſo prodigious humility.

And is it not good matter of joy to be thus highly graced[o]? When are men better pleaſed, than when they are preferred; then eſpecially, when from the Pſal. cxiii. 7, 8. meaneſt ſtate, *from the dunghill*, or *from the duſt*, they 1 Sam. ii. 8. *are raiſed to be ſet among princes*, and *made to inherit the throne of glory?* Wherefore this being our caſe, Job xvii. 14. that we ſons of earth, *children of corruption*, and *bre-*

[n] Qui cum origini humanæ multum dederit, quod nos ad imaginem ſuam fecit, reparationi noſtræ longe amplius tribuit, cum ſervili formæ ipſe ſe Dominus coaptavit. *Leo de Nat. Serm.* 4.

[o] Exultent ergo in laudem Dei corda credentium, et mirabilia ejus confiteantur filii hominum, quoniam in hoc præcipue Dei opere humilitas noſtra cognoſcit, quanti eam ſuus conditor æſtimârit. *Leo Serm.* 4.

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thren of worms (in Job's ſtyle); we exiles of paradiſe, we heirs of death and miſery; we, that by our nature are the loweſt of all intelligent creatures, that by our merits were debaſed *beneath the beaſts that periſh*, that we are aſſumed to ſuch relations, that we are ennobled to ſuch a pitch, that our nature hath mounted ſo high above all creatures, with what enlargement of heart ſhould we entertain a diſpenſation ſo wonderful! how welcome ſhould that day be, which doth introduce it [p]! SERM. I. Pſal. xlix. 12.

6. Finally, if we ſurvey all principal cauſes of joy, and ſpecial exultation, we ſhall find them all concurring in this event.

Is a meſſenger of good news embraced with joy? Behold the great Evangeliſt is come, with his mouth full of news, moſt admirable, moſt acceptable: he, who doth acquaint us, that God is well pleaſed, that man is reſtored, that *the Adverſary is caſt down*, that paradiſe is ſet open, and immortality retrieved; that truth and righteouſneſs, peace and joy, ſalvation and happineſs are deſcended, and come to dwell on earth; he of whom the prophet told, *How beautiful upon the mountains are the feet of him that bringeth good tidings; that publiſheth peace, that bringeth good tidings of good, that publiſheth ſalvation, that ſaith unto Zion, Thy God reigneth*; he who doth himſelf thus declare the drift and purport of his meſſage; *The ſpirit of the Lord God is upon me, to preach good tidings unto the meek; he hath ſent me to bind up the broken hearted; to proclaim liberty to the captives, and opening of the priſon to them that are bound; to proclaim the acceptable year of the Lord, to comfort all that mourn.* Apoc. xii. 10. John xiv. 30. Luke x. 18. Iſa. lii. 7. Nah. i. 15. Rom. x. 15. Iſa. lxi. 1, 2. Luke iv. 18, 19.

Is the birth of a prince by honeſt ſubjects to be commemorated with joyous feſtivity? Behold a Prince born to all the world! a Prince undertaking to rule mankind with ſweeteſt clemency and exact Iſa. xi. 2. Pſal. xlv. & lxxii.

[p] Hic infirmitatis noſtræ ſuſcipiens conditionem, propter quos ad inferna deſcendit eoſdem in cœleſtibus collocavit. *Leo de Nat.* 5.

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SERM. I. juſtice; a Prince bringing with him all peace and proſperity; *in whoſe days Judah ſhall be ſaved, and Iſrael ſhall dwell ſafely*; who ſhall protect us in aſ-
Jer. xxiii. 6. ſured reſt and ſafety; ſhall ſecure us from all danger and miſchief; ſhall atchieve moſt gallant and glorious exploits in our behalf; ſhall vanquiſh all the enemies of our welfare; ſhall reſcue us from the worſt ſlaveries and miſchiefs; ſhall ſettle us in a
Luke i. 71, 74, 75. moſt free and happy ſtate: he *who bringeth ſalvation from our enemies, and from the hands of all that hate us*, that, *being delivered from the hands of our enemies, we might ſerve him without fear, in holineſs and righteouſneſs before him, all the days of our life.* Now therefore it
Apoc. xix. 6, 7. xi. 15. is ſeaſonable to cry out, *Allelujah, for the Lord God omnipotent reigneth; let us be glad and rejoice, and give honour to him.*

Iſa. ix. 3. May victory worthily beget exultation? See the invincible Warrior doth iſſue forth into the field,
Apoc. vi. 2. Luke xi. 22. *conquering and to conquer*: he that ſhall baffle and riſle *the ſtrong one*, our formidable adverſary; that ſhall
Col. ii. 15. (John vi. 33.) rout all the forces of hell, and *triumph over* the powers of darkneſs; that utterly ſhall defeat ſin, and ſlay death itſelf; that ſhall ſubdue the world, and lay all things proſtrate at his feet; behold the *Captain of our ſalvation*, arrayed with glorious humility, and armed with a mighty patience; ſee, the great blow is ſtruck, at which the infernal powers do ſtag-
1 John iii. 8. Rom. xvi. 20. ger; the Devil's pride and envy are abaſed, all the enemies are amazed, are daunted, are confounded at his preſence; they cannot ſtand, they break, they ſcatter, they flee before him.

Is a proclamation of peace, after rueful wars, to
Eph. ii. 17. be ſolemnized with alacrity? Behold then everlaſting peace between heaven and earth, a general peace among men, a ſound peace between each good man and himſelf are ſettled and publiſhed; the illuſtrious herald, the noble hoſtage of them is arrived; *the*
(Iſa. lvii. 2.) Acts x. 36. *Prince of peace* himſelf doth bring all peace unto us.
Iſa. ix. 6. Is ſatisfaction of deſire, and hope very pleaſant? Behold

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Behold the *desire of all nations, the expectation of Israel,* he for whom the whole creation groaned, is come. SERM. I.

Is recovery of liberty delectable to poor slaves and captives? Behold, the *Redeemer is come out of Sion*; the precious ransom, sufficient to purchase the freedom of many worlds, is laid down; unblemished innocence, purity, and perfection appearing in human nature, have procured a releasement for us; have unlocked the prison of sin detaining us, have knocked off the shackles of guilt sorely pinching and galling our consciences; have wrested us from the hands of those proud masters, who claimed a right, who exercised a most tyrannous power over us [q]; he is come, that *proclaimeth liberty to the captives, and opening of the prison to them that are bound*; the time is come, of which the prophet foretold; *The ransomed of the Lord shall return, and come to Sion with songs, and everlasting joy upon their heads; they shall obtain joy and gladness; and sorrow and sighing shall flee away.* (Gal. iii. 22.) Luke iv. 18. Isa. xxxv. 10.

Is an overture of health acceptable to sick and languishing persons? Behold the great Physician, endued with admirable skill, and furnished with infallible remedies, is come, to cure us of our maladies, and ease us of our pains; to bind up our wounds, and to pour in balm (the most sovereign balm of his own blood) into them; to free us, not only from all mortiferous diseases, but from mortality itself: he, who *was sent to bind up and heal the broken hearted*; he, who *himself took our infirmities, and bare our sicknesses*; he, of whom the prophet (in relation to corporal, and much more to spiritual infirmities) did foretel;—*God will come and save you; then the eyes of the blind shall be opened, and the ears of the deaf shall be unstopped; then shall the lame man leap as a hart,* Luke x. 33. Matt. ix. 12. 1 Pet. ii. 24. Isa. lxi. 1. Luke iv. 18. Isa. liii. 4. Matt. viii. 17. Isa. xxxv. 4, 5. Matt. xi. 5. Luke v. 17.

[q] Nam superbia hostis antiqui non immerito sibi in omnes homines jus tyrannicum vindicabat, nec indebito dominatu premebat, quos a mandato Dei spontaneos in obsequium suæ voluntatis allexerat. *Leo de Nat. Serm.* 2.

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SERM. I. *and the tongue of the dumb ſhall ſing*; he, whoſe art no diſeaſe can reſiſt, who is able to cure our moſt deſperate, our moſt inveterate diſtempers; to heal the corruption and impotency of our nature, to avoid the ignorances and errors of our underſtanding, to correct the ſtupidity of our hearts, the perverſeneſs of our wills, the diſorder of our affections, to mitigate our anguiſh of conſcience, and cleanſe our ſores of guilt; by various efficacious medicines, by the wholeſome inſtructions of his doctrine, by the powerful inſpirations of his grace, by the refreſhing comforts of his ſpirit, by the ſalutary virtue of his merits and ſufferings.

(John xii. 40. Acts x. 38. Luke x. 34. (Ezek. xxxvi. 26. Eph. ii. 10.)

Is mirth ſeaſonable on the day of marriage? Behold the greateſt wedding that ever was is this day ſolemnized: heaven and earth are contracted; divinity is eſpouſed to humanity; a ſacred, an indiſſoluble knot is tied between God and man; *The Bridegroom is come forth out of his chamber, (verbum Dei de utero virginali)* clad in his nuptial garment of fleſh, and ready to wed the Church his beloved Spouſe[r]; *Let us therefore be glad and rejoice; for the marriage of the Lamb is come, and his wife hath made herſelf ready.*

Joel ii. 16. Apoc. xix. 7.

Is the acceſs of a good friend to be received with cheerful gratulation? Behold the deareſt and beſt friend of all mankind (moſt able, moſt willing, moſt ready to perform all good offices, to impart wholeſome advice, needful aid, ſweet converſe, and ſeaſonable conſolation) is arrived to viſit us, to ſojourn with us, to dwell with us for ever.

Is opportune relief grateful to perſons in a forlorn condition, pinched with extreme want, or plunged

[r] In natali Domini quaſi in nuptiis ſpiritualibus ſponſæ ſuæ Eccleſiæ Chriſtus adjunctus eſt—tunc proceſſit ſponſus de thalamo ſuo, hoc eſt, verbum Dei de utero virginali. *Aug. de temp. Serm.* 2.

Ἡ παρὰς ἐν ᾗ ὁ λόγος ἐνυμφεύσατο τὴν σάρκα. *Procl. in Epb.* p. 1.

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in any hard distress? Behold, a merciful, a bounti- SERM. ful, a mighty Saviour and succourer, undertaking *to* I. *comfort all that mourn*, inviting all such to receive from him a plentiful supply for their needs, a comfortable ease in their pressures, a happy riddance from their calamities; who *crieth* aloud, *If any one* Εκραξε. *thirsteth, let him come to me and drink*; *Come to me all* John vii. *ye that labour and are heavy laden, and I will give you* 37. Isa. lv. 1. *rest.* xliv. 3. Matt. xi. 28.

Is the sun-rising comfortable, after a tedious, darksome, and cold night? See, *the Sun of righteous-* Mal. iv. 2. *ness is risen with healing in his wings*, dispensing all about his pleasant rays and kindly influences: *The* Luke i. 78. *day-spring from on high hath visited us*; diffusing an universal light upon the souls of men, whereby the night of ignorance is dispelled, the spectres of error are vanished, the mists of doubt are scattered; whereby we clearly and assuredly discern all truths of importance to us, and worthy of our knowledge; concerning the nature and attributes, the works and providence, the will and pleasure of God; concerning ourselves, our nature and original, our duty and interest, our future state, and final doom: *Our light* Isa. lx. 1. *is come, and the glory of the Lord is risen upon us*; *the* John viii. 12. ix. 5. *light of the world, the true light, enlightening every man,* i. 9. by whose lustre *all flesh may see the salvation of God,* Luke iii. 6. i. 79. and *which guideth our feet in the way of peace*, doth visibly shine forth upon us.

Never indeed did heaven with so fair and serene a countenance smile upon earth, as then it did, when this (ἀστὴρ λαμπρὸς καὶ ὀρθρινὸς,) *bright and morn-* Apoc. xxii. *ing-star* did spring up above our horizon, bringing this 16. goodly day; and with it shedding life and cheer among us.

From this auspicious day did commence the revocation of that fatal curse, by which we were expelled from paradise, adjudged to death, and committed to hell; from thence we became reinstated in

SERM. I. in a condition of hope, and in a fair capacity of happineſs; from thence is to be dated a return of joy into this region of diſconſolateneſs. In this nativity mankind was born, or did revive from manifold deaths; from a legal, a moral, a natural, an eternal death; from lying dead in irreparable guilt, and under an inſuperable power of ſin; from having our bodies irrecoverably diſſolved by corruption, and our ſouls immerſed into that *ſecond* more ghaſtly *death* of perpetual incurable anguiſh.

It is in effect therefore the birth-day of the world; the beginning of a new, better, eternal life to men, (offered to all, and effectually beſtowed on thoſe who will embrace it,) which we now do celebrate *. All reaſon therefore we have to rejoice moſt heartily, and moſt abundantly: as the goods thence accruing to us are in multitude innumerable, in quality ineſtimable, in duration immenſe; ſo in ſome correſpondence ſhould our joy be very intenſe, very effuſe, very ſtable; the contemplation of them ſhould infuſe ſomewhat of that *unſpeakable joy*, whereof St. Peter ſpeaketh; we ſhould *be filled* (according to St. Paul's expreſſion) *with all joy and peace in believing* them; we ſhould *hold faſt* (as the Apoſtle to the Hebrews adviſeth) *the confidence and rejoicing of hope*, grounded on them, *firm to the end.*

Χαρᾷ ἀνεκλαλήτῳ. 1 Pet. i. 8. Rom. xv. 13. Phil. i. 25. Heb. iii. 6. Rom. xii. 12.

Having ſo many, ſo great cauſes of joy, are we not very ſtupid, are we not ſtrangely croſs and perverſe, if we neglect ſo pleaſant a duty?

To conclude: Of all the days that riſe upon us, this undoubtedly is the queen, crowned by God's

* It is the birth-day of the Church. Generatio enim Chriſti origo eſt populi Chriſtiani, et natalis capitis natalis eſt corporis. *P. Leo de Nat. Serm. 6.*

Sicut cum Chriſto in paſſione crucifixi, in reſurrectione reſuſcitati, in aſcenſione ad dextram Patris collocati, ita cum ipſo ſumus in hac nativitate congeniti. *Ibid.*

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own hand with ſovereign bleſſings; God hath avowed it to be the day of his peculiar making, and therefore of our ſpecial rejoicing; for thus of old the inſpired Pſalmiſt did teach and exhort us to keep Chriſtmas: *This is the day, which the Lord hath made; let us rejoice and be glad therein.* SERM. I.

Pſal. cxviii. 24. Matt. xxi. 9. 42. Acts iv. 11. 1 Pet. ii. 7.

SERMON

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SERMON II.

The Sufferings of Chriſt foretold in the Old Teſtament.

Acts iii. 18.

But thoſe things, which God before had ſhewed by the mouth of all his prophets, that Chriſt ſhould ſuffer, he hath ſo fulfilled.

SERM. II.

MANY good arguments there are, different in kind, which conſpire to perſuade the truth of our Religion; ſuch as are the intrinſic reaſonableneſs, excellency, and perfection of its doctrine; the miraculous works performed in atteſtation thereto; the ſpecial favour of Providence declared in the ſupport and propagation thereof: but upon no other ground do the Scriptures ſo much build its truth, and our obligation to embrace it, as upon the exact correſpondence and conformity thereof to all the ancient Scriptures, which did foreſhew or foretell its revelation and introduction into the world; to thoſe eſpecially which deſcribed the perſonal characters, circumſtances, and performances of our Lord: to this our Lord, in his diſcourſes and diſputes with incredulous people, referred them; *Search the Scriptures,* ſaid he, *becauſe in them ye expect to have eternal life*; John v. 39.

(that

SERM. II. (that is, to find the true way of ſaving truth leading thereto,) *and thoſe are they which teſtify of me:* by this he inſtructed and convinced his Diſciples; *beginning from Moſes and from all the Prophets, he expounded unto them in all the Scriptures the things concerning himſelf:* and, *Theſe* (ſaid he to them preſently before his departure) *are the words, which I ſpake unto you, while I was yet with you, that all things muſt be fulfilled, which were written in the law of Moſes, and in the Prophets, and in the Pſalms concerning me:* this the Apoſtles, in all their preaching, (whereby they taught, proved, and perſuaded the Chriſtian doctrine,) did chiefly inſiſt upon; *Moſes*, ſaith St. Peter, *truly ſaid unto the Fathers, yea, and all the Prophets from Samuel, and thoſe that follow after, as many as have ſpoken, have likewiſe foretold of theſe days*; and, *To him*, ſaith he again, *give all the Prophets witneſs, that through his name whoſoever believeth in him ſhall receive remiſſion of ſins.* And of St. Paul it is ſaid, that *he mightily convinced the Jews—ſhewing by the Scriptures, that Jeſus was the Chriſt*; and—*he expounded, and teſtified the kingdom of God, perſuading them concerning Jeſus, both out of the Law of Moſes, and out of the Prophets:* thus the chief Apoſtles and founders of our religion in their public diſcourſes; and in their Epiſtles they obſerve the ſame method; as particularly aſſerting Chriſtian doctrines and duties by the teſtimonies of prophetical Scriptures, ſo generally affirming our Religion to be chiefly grounded on them; *of which ſalvation* (ſaith St. Peter, concerning the ſalvation exhibited by the Goſpel) *the Prophets did inquire, and ſearch diligently, who propheſied of the grace to come unto you*; and (in regard to the conviction of others) he ſeems to prefer the atteſtation of this kind before the ſpecial revelation immediately made to the Apoſtles; for having ſpoken of it, he ſubjoins, καὶ ἔχομεν βεβαιότερον τὸν προφητικὸν λόγον· *We have alſo a more ſure word of prophecy, whereunto ye do well, that ye do take heed, as unto a light that ſhineth in a dark place, until the*

Luke xxiv. 27. xxii. 37. i. 70. xxiv. 44.

Acts iii. 22, 24.

Acts x. 43. xiii. 27. xv. 15. xxiv. 14.

John i. 45. Acts xviii. 28. xxviii. 23.

1 Pet. i. 10.

2 Pet. i. 19.

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the day dawn, and the day-ſtar ariſe in your hearts. SERM. And St. Paul ſaith, that *the myſtery, which was kept* II. *ſecret ſince the world began, was then made manifeſt, and* ——— *by the prophetical Scriptures, according to the command-* Rom. xvi. *ment of the everlaſting God, made known to all nations,* 25, 26. i. 2. *to the obedience of faith*; and, *The holy Writings* (he telleth Timothy) *were able to make him wiſe to the* 2 Tim. iii. *ſalvation*, which is, *by the faith of Jeſus Chriſt*; that 15. is, they were able to ſhew and perſuade to him the truth of Chriſtianity, which promiſeth ſalvation to all that heartily embrace it, and obſerve its laws.

Such a ſtreſs was laid upon this probation by the founders of our religion; and no wonder; for that it is not only extremely forcible in itſelf, but hath ſome particular uſes, and ſome peculiar advantages beyond others. The foreknowledge of future contingent events, (ſuch as were many of thoſe concerning our Saviour, depending upon the freeſt acts of human will,) as it is for the manner of attaining it moſt incomprehenſible to us, ſo it is moſt proper to God, and by all men ſo acknowledged; future contingencies being ſecrets, which no man, no angel, no creature can dive into, they being not diſcernible in their cauſes, which are indeterminate; nor in themſelves, who are finite. The prediction therefore of ſuch events could not otherwiſe than proceed from his pleaſure; neither could he yield it in any way of favour and approbation to that, which was not perfectly true and good: this way therefore doth abſolutely confirm the truth and goodneſs of Chriſtian doctrine; it withal manifeſts the great worth and weight thereof, as implying the particular regard and care God had of it, deſigning it ſo anciently, laying trains of providence toward it, and preparing ſuch evidences for the confirmation thereof; it together into the bargain maintaineth the truth of the Jewiſh diſpenſation, the ſincerity of the ancient Patriarchs and Prophets, and the vigilant care the divine goodneſs hath always had over the ſtate of religion, and toward

SERM. II. toward the welfare of mankind; never leaving it deſtitute of ſome immediate revelations from himſelf. It had a peculiar aptitude to convert the Jews, who were poſſeſſed with a full perſuaſion concerning the veracity and ſanctity of their ancient Prophets; and could not therefore doubt concerning the truth of that, which appeared conformable to that which they had foretold ſhould be declared, and diſpenſed for their benefit. This probation alſo hath this advantage, that it ſingly taken doth ſuffice to convince; whereas others can hardly do it otherwiſe than in conjunction with one another, and eſpecially with its aid: for the goodneſs of the doctrine may be conteſted in ſome points; and however good it ſeem, it may be imputed to human invention: ſtrange effects may be deemed producible by other cauſes beſide divine power; and they may be ſuffered to be done for other ends than for confirmation of truth; they are alſo commonly tranſient, and thence moſt liable to doubt: Providence alſo is in many caſes ſo myſterious and unſearchable, that the incredulous will never allow any inferences to be drawn from it: but the plain correſpondence of events to the ſtanding records of ancient prophecies (obvious and conſpicuous to every one that will conſult and compare them) concerning a perſon to be ſent by God, who ſhould have ſuch circumſtances, and be ſo qualified, who ſhould in God's name preach ſuch doctrines and perform ſuch works, is a proof, which alone may aſſure any man, that ſuch a perſon doth come from God, and is in what he declareth or doeth approved by him: no counterfeiting here can find place; no evaſion can be deviſed from the force of this proof.

This way therefore of diſcourſe our Lord and his Apoſtles (whoſe buſineſs it was by the moſt proper and effectual methods to ſubdue the reaſons of men to the *obedience of faith*, and entertainment of Chriſtian truth,) did eſpecially uſe; as generally in reſpect to

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to all things concerning our Lord, ſo particularly in regard to his paſſion; declaring it to happen punctually according to what had been foreſeen by God, and thence foreſhewed by his Prophets, rightly underſtood; *He took the twelve*, (ſaith St. Luke of our Lord) *and ſaid unto them, Behold, we go up to Jeruſalem, and all things that are written by the Prophets concerning the Son of man ſhall be accompliſhed; for he ſhall be delivered unto the Gentiles, and ſhall be mocked, and ſpitefully entreated, and ſpitted on; and they ſhall ſcourge him, and put him to death* And again, after his reſurrection, he thus reproves his Diſciples; *O fools, and ſlow of heart to believe all that the Prophets have ſpoken! Ought not Chriſt to have ſuffered theſe things, and to enter into his glory?* They did not then (partly being blinded with prejudice, partly not having uſed due induſtry, and perhaps not excelling in natural capacity, however not yet being ſufficiently enlightened by divine grace) apprehend, or diſcern, that, according to the prophetical inſtructions, our Lord was ſo to ſuffer; but afterward, when he had *opened their underſtanding, that they might underſtand the Scriptures*, they did ſee, and ſpecially urge this point: then St. Peter declared, that *the ſpirit of Chriſt, which was in the Prophets, did teſtify beforehand the ſufferings of Chriſt, and the glory that ſhould follow*; then it was their manner to *reaſon* (as is ſaid of St. Paul) *out of the Scriptures, opening, and alleging, that Chriſt muſt needs have ſuffered; ſaying none other things, than thoſe, which the Prophets and Moſes did ſay ſhould come, that Chriſt ſhould ſuffer; delivering firſt of all, that Chriſt died for our ſins, according to the Scriptures:* this is that which in my text St. Peter doth inſiſt upon, affirming about the paſſion of Chriſt, that it not only had been predicted by one, or more, but foreſhewed by an univerſal conſent of all the Prophets; to illuſtrate and confirm which aſſertion of his, is the ſcope of our preſent diſcourſe: to perform which, after having

SERM. II.

Luke xviii. 31, 32, 33.

Luke xxiv. 25, 26, 46.

Luke xxiv. 45.

1 Pet. i. 11.

Acts xvii. 2, 3. xxvi. 22, 23.

1 Cor. xv. 3.

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SERM. II. ing briefly touched the ſtate of the matter in hand, we ſhall apply ourſelves.

That the Meſſias was to come in an humble and homely manner; (without appearance of worldly ſplendor, or grandeur;) that he was to converſe among men in a ſtate of external poverty and meanneſs; that he was to cauſe offences, and find oppoſitions in his proceedings; that he was to be repulſed and rejected, to be hated and ſcorned, to be diſgracefully and harſhly treated, to be grievouſly perſecuted and afflicted; yea, that at laſt he was to be proſecuted, condemned, and executed as a malefactor, is a truth indeed, which the Jews (although they firmly believed and earneſtly expected the coming of a Meſſias) did not, and indeed were hardly capable to entertain. It was a point repugnant to the whole frame of their conceits; yea, inconſiſtent with the nature and drift of their religion, as they did underſtand it; for their religion in its ſurface (deeper than which their groſs fancy could not penetrate) did repreſent earthly wealth, dignity, and proſperity, as things moſt highly valuable; did propound them as very proper, if not as the ſole rewards of piety and obedience; did imply conſequently the poſſeſſion of them to be certain arguments of the divine good-will and regard: they could not therefore but eſteem poverty, affliction, and diſgrace, as curſes from heaven, and plain indications of God's diſfavour toward thoſe on whom they fell: they particularly are ſaid to have conceited, that to be rich was a needful qualification for a Prophet; (no leſs needful, than to be of a good complexion, of a good capacity, of a good converſation and life:) *Spiritus Dei non requieſcit ſuper pauperem, the Spirit of God doth not reſt upon a poor man*; (that is, no ſpecial communications of grace, or of wiſdom and goodneſs, are by God ever afforded to perſons of a low and afflicted condition;) being a *maxim*, which they had framed, and which currently paſſed

paſſed among them: that he therefore, who was de- SERM.
ſigned to be ſo notable a Prophet; who was to have II.
the honour of being ſo ſpecial an inſtrument of pro-
moting God's ſervice and glory; who therefore ſhould
be ſo highly favoured by God, that he ſhould appear
deſpicable, and undergo great afflictions, was a no-
tion that could not but ſeem very abſurd; that
could not otherwiſe than be very abominable to
them. They had farther (in congruity to theſe pre-
judices, abetted by that extreme ſelf-love and ſelf-
flattery, which were peculiar to that nation,) raiſed
in themſelves a ſtrong opinion, that the Meſſias was
to come in a great viſible ſtate and power; to at-
chieve deeds of mighty proweſs and renown; to
bring the nations of the world into ſubjection under
him; and ſo to reign among them in huge majeſty
and proſperity. When Jeſus therefore (however other-
wiſe anſwerable in his circumſtances, qualifications,
and performances, to the prophetical characters of
the Meſſias) did firſt appear ſuch as he did, with Matt. xvi.
ſome pretences, or intimations rather, that he was 20.
the Meſſias, their ſtomach preſently roſe at it; they
were exceedingly ſcandalized at him; they deemed
him not only *a madman* (one poſſeſſed or diſtracted) Matt. xiii.
and *an impoſtor*, but *a blaſphemer*; for no leſs than 57. xxvi.
blaſphemy they took it to be for ſo mean and pitiful 65.
a wretch (as to their eyes he ſeemed) to aſſume unto
himſelf ſo high a dignity, and ſo near a relation unto
God, as being the Meſſias did import. We even ſee
the Diſciples themſelves of our Lord ſo deeply im-
bued with this national prejudice, that, even after
they had avowed him for the Chriſt, they could
ſcarce with patience hear him foretelling what griev-
ous things ſhould befall him: St. Peter himſelf,
upon that occaſion, even juſt after he had ſeriouſly
confeſſed him to be the Chriſt, *did*, as it is expreſſed, Matt. xvi.
take him, and began to rebuke him, ſaying, Be it far from 22. xvii. 2.
thee, Lord: yea, preſently after that our Lord moſt John xvi.
plainly had deſcribed his ſufferings to them, they 12.

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SERM. II. could not forbear dreaming of a kingdom, and of being *grandees* therein: yea, farther, even after our Lord's paſſion and reſurrection, this fancy ſtill poſſeſſed them; for even then they demanded of him, whether he would *at that time reſtore the kingdom unto Iſrael*; meaning ſuch an external viſible kingdom.

Matt. xx. 21. 25. Acts i. 6.

Hence of all things, notifying the Meſſias, this ſeemeth to be the only particular, which in general the Jews did not, or would not, ſee and acknowledge; and this cauſed them to overſee all other glorious marks, how clearly ſoever ſhining in and about the perſon of Jeſus: this cloud hindered them from diſcerning the excellency of his doctrine, from regarding the ſanctity of his life, from being duly affected with the wonderfulneſs of his works, from minding, or from crediting all the teſtimonies from heaven miniſtered unto him; this, as St. Paul telleth us, was the main *ſcandal*, which obſtructed their embracing the Goſpel. As it was their ignorance or error in this point, which diſpoſed them to perſecute our Lord; (*niſi enim ignoratus nihil pati poſſet*, as Tertullian ſaith; *if they had known, they would not have crucified the Lord of glory*, ſaith St. Paul;) ſo it was that, which maintained their obſtinate hatred of his name and memory; although graced with ſo illuſtrious teſtimonies of divine power and providence.

1 Cor. i. 23. Acts xiii. 27. iii. 17. John xv. 21. Tert. in Marc. iii. 6. 1 Cor. ii. 8.

We cannot therefore here, as in other particulars concerning our Lord, allege the general conſent of God's people in expounding the Prophets according to our ſenſe, this being one of thoſe points, in reſpect to which the Prophets themſelves did foreſee and foretel their perverſe ſtupidity and incredulity; that *they ſhould look, and not ſee; hear, and not underſtand*; yielding herein ſpecial occaſion to that complaint, *Who hath believed our report?* Yet notwithſtanding their affected and culpable blindneſs, there is no particular concerning the Meſſias in the ancient Scriptures, either more frequently in way of myſtical inſinuation and adumbration glanced at, or

Vid. Tert. ibid. Iſa. vi. 9. Matt. xiii. 13. Ezek. xii. 2. Acts xxviii. 26. Iſa. liii. 1.

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or more clearly in direct and plain language expreſſed; or which alſo by reaſonable deduction thence may be more ſtrongly inferred than this. SERM. II.

1. I ſay, firſt, it is frequently glanced at by myſtical inſinuations; for explaining the intent of which aſſertion, we ſhall premiſe ſomewhat, which may ſerve to declare the pertinency of many citations produced out of the ancient Scripture in the New Teſtament; the which, together with others connected with them, or bearing juſt analogy to them, we alſo, being aſſured of their deſign by the authority of our Lord and his Apoſtles, may ſafely preſume after them to apply to the ſame purpoſes.

We may then conſider, that the all-wiſe God (who *worketh all things after the counſel of his own will*, and *to whom all things are preſent*) having *before eternal times* (as St. Paul ſpeaketh) determined in due time to ſend the Meſſias, for accompliſhing the greateſt deſign that ever was to be managed in this world, (that which ſhould bring the higheſt glory to himſelf, and procure the richeſt benefits to the principal of his creatures here,) did by his incomprehenſible providence ſo order things, that all the ſpecial diſpenſations preceding it ſhould have a fit tendency and an advantageous reference thereto; ſo that, when it came upon the ſtage, it might appear that the main of the plot conſiſted therein; and that whatever was acted before had principally a reſpect thereto. As therefore from the beginning of things God did in a gradual method make real preparations towards it, by ſeveral ſteps imparting diſcoveries of his mind about it, or in order thereto, (ſomewhat to Adam himſelf, more to Abraham and the Patriarchs, ſomewhat farther to Moſes, much more yet to divers of the Prophets, among his choſen people, who not only foretold largely concerning it, but delivered divers kinds of inſtruction conformable to it, and conducible to the promoting and entertainment thereof,) ſo he did alſo take eſpecial care by many appoſite

Eph. i. 11. 2 Tim. i. 9. Tit. i. 2. 1 Cor. ii. 7. Eph. i. 3. iii. 9. Rom. xvi. 25. Col. i. 26.

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SERM. II. representations (νοητὰ θεωρήματα, *intelligible spectacles*, or objects of mental speculation, Eusebius calleth them,) handsomely inserted into all his dispensations, to set it out, and to insinuate his meaning about it; that so it might at length shew itself with more solemnity, and less surprise: the most eminent persons therefore, whom he raised up, and employed in his affairs, tending to that end, as they did resemble the Messias, in being instruments of God's particular grace and providence; (being indeed inferior Christs, and Mediators, partial Saviours, and Redeemers of his people, as they are sometimes called,) so they were ordered in several circumstances of their persons, in divers actions they performed, in the principal accidents befalling them, to represent him: (becoming εἰκονικοὶ Χριστοὶ, *Christs in image*, as Eusebius again styleth them:) the rites also and services of Religion instituted by them in God's name, were adapted to the same purpose; they and all things about them, by God's especial direction and wise care, being fitted so as to be congruous emblems and shadows prefiguring Christ, and whatever appertained to him: thus was Adam (as St. Paul calleth him) *a type of Christ*; and Abel, Melchisedec, Isaac, Moses, Joshua, David, Solomon, Zorobabel are intimated to have been such; the most signal things done by them or befalling them, having been suited to answer somewhat remarkable concerning him; so that we may say of them all, as the Apostle to the Hebrews did of the Jewish priests, *they served to the subindication and shadowing of heavenly things*. In David particularly this relation is so plain, that because thereof, in the prophets Jeremiah, Ezekiel, and Hosea, the Messias is called by his name; as if he were revived in the Messias. It indeed well suited the dignity of this great Personage, and the importance of his business, that he should have appointed so notable heralds and harbingers to *go before his face*; furnished with conspicuous ensigns and badges denoting their relation

Euseb. Hist. i. 3.

Psal. cv. 15 Isa. xlv. 1. Heb. viii. 6 Gal. iii. 19. Neh. ix. 27. Acts vii. 45.

Euseb. Hist. i. 14.

Heb. viii. 5. Exod. xxv. 40. Rom. v. 14. Vid. Euseb. ib.

Heb. viii. 5. Οἵτινες ὑποδείγματι καὶ σκιᾷ λατρεύουσι τῶν ἐπουρανίων

Jer. xxx. 9. Hos. iii. 5. Ezek. xxxiv. 23, 24. xxxvii. 24, 25. (Heb. viii. 5. x. 1. ix. 23. Gal. iv. 24. Col. ii. 17.)

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tion to him. It was proper, that God ſhould appear to have had always an expreſs regard toward him: it conſequently doth ſerve to our edification; for that we duly comparing things, and eſpying this admirable correſpondency, may be inſtructed thereby, and eſtabliſhed in our faith; may be excited to the admiration of God's wiſdom, ſo harmoniouſly connecting things, and of his goodneſs, ſo provident for our welfare; may alſo be induced thereby the more highly to adore the Meſſias, and to eſteem his deſign: ſuch uſes St. Paul ſignifieth, when having compared divers things concerning Moſes to things concerning Chriſt, he ſaith, *All theſe things happened as types, and they were written for our admonition, on whom the ends of the world are come.* SERM. II. 1 Cor. x. 11. 6. 1 Pet. i. 12.

It is alſo (both for illuſtration and proof of theſe things) to be obſerved, that becauſe thoſe eminent ſervants of God were repreſentatives of Chriſt, many things are ſpoken of them, as ſuch; many things are aſcribed to them, which only, or chiefly, were intended of him; their names are uſed as veils to cover divers things concerning him, which it ſeemed to divine wiſdom not ſo convenient in a more open and clear manner to diſcloſe promiſcuouſly to all men. That this obſervation is true; that, I ſay, under the names of perſons repreſenting Chriſt (or of things, we may add, adumbrating his things) many things are intimated principally concerning him, and his diſpenſations, may be collected and confirmed from hence, that many things are attributed to perſons (and to things alſo) which do not agree to them; many things were promiſed, which appear never accompliſhed, except after an improper and hyperbolical manner of expreſſion, or according to an enormous wideneſs of interpretation; ſuch as do not well ſeem to ſuit the nature of true hiſtories, and ſerious promiſes: thus, for inſtance, many things are foretold concerning the large extent and proſperous ſtate of the Jewiſh Church; which hiſtory Iſa. xxv. 8.

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SERM. II. and experience do teſtify never (according to ſtrictneſs of literal acceptation, yea not in any tolerable degree, near the height of what the words import) to have come to paſs: thus alſo (as the Apoſtle to the Hebrews argueth) effects are attributed to the Jewiſh rites and ſacrifices, which according to the nature of things cannot belong to them, otherwiſe than as ſubſtitutes and ſhadows of things more high in ſubſtance and efficacy: thus alſo what is with ſolemn oath promiſed to Solomon (concerning the vaſt extent and endleſs duration of his empire in righteouſneſs, peace and proſperity; together with his mighty acts, and ſucceſsful atchievements) doth not appear directly in any competent meaſure to have been accompliſhed: thus alſo David (as St. Peter in the 2d. of the Acts obſerveth, and groundeth his argumentation on it) ſpeaketh divers things of himſelf, which cannot be conceived properly and literally agreeable to him: ſuch things therefore (having ſome truth under them) are reaſonably ſuppoſed to be intimations of ſomewhat appertaining to the future more perfect ſtate of things under the Meſſias; to concern him (who was to be *the end of the law*) and his diſpenſation, which was to be the accompliſhment of all things predicted and preſignified: this is that which St. Auſtin ſignifieth, when he ſaith of Chriſt, that *Him all the promiſes of the Jewiſh nation, all their prophecies, prieſthoods, ſacrifices, their temple, and all their ſacraments whatever did reſound*, or expreſs[t].

Heb. x. 4. Pſal. xlv, lxxii, lxxxiii, &c. Acts ii. 29. Rom. x. 4. Luke xxii. 37. 1 Pet. i. 10, &c.

Neither are theſe things only ſaid according to ſuppoſitions aſſumed in the New Teſtament; but they agree, as to their general importance, to the ſenſe of the ancient Jews, who did conceive ſuch myſterious references often to lie couched under the

[t] Quem Chriſtum—omnia gentis illius promiſſa, omnes prophetiæ, ſacerdotia, ſacrificia, templum, et cuncta omnino ſacramenta ſonuerunt. *Aug. ad Voluſ. Ep. 3.*

letter

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letter of the Scriptures: they did ſuppoſe every where a *Midraſh*, or myſtical ſenſe; which they very ſtudiouſly (even to an excels of curioſity and diligence) ſearched after: it was a conſtant and confident opinion of their doctors, that all things in Moſes's law were typical, and capable of allegorical expoſition; and Philo's writings (compoſed immediately after our Saviour's time) do ſhew that opinion then to have been paſſable. We have alſo ſeveral inſtances and intimations thereof in the New Teſtament: neither is it probable, that our Lord and the Apoſtles would, in their diſcourſes and diſputations with the Jews, have uſed this way of alleging and interpreting paſſages of Scripture, if they in general had not admitted and approved it.

SERM. II.

Vid. Capell. in Exerc. ad Zohar.

Why God ſhould chooſe to expreſs matters of this nature in ſuch a manner, we need not to determine; it might be perhaps for reaſons only known to himſelf, above our ken or cognizance: yet divers probable reaſons may be aſſigned for it, yea ſome more than probable, ſeeing they are expreſſed or hinted in Scripture. It might be for a decent and harmonious diſcrimination of times, of diſpenſations, of perſons; it might be from the depth of things to conciliate reverence to them, and to raiſe the price of knowing them, by the difficulty of attaining thereto; it might be by exerciſe to improve the underſtandings of men, to inflame their deſire, to excite their induſtry, to provoke their devotion, to render them modeſt and humble; it might be for occaſion to reward an honeſt and diligent ſtudy of God's word, and to convey ſpecial gifts of interpretation; it might be to conceal ſome things from ſome perſons unworthy or unfit to know them, eſpecially from haughty and ſelf-conceited perſons; it might be to uſe the ignorance of ſome, as a means to produce ſome great events; ſuch as was the miſuſing and perſecuting our Lord: for ſuch reaſons it might be, and there is no good reaſon againſt it; for it cannot be

Vid. Toſ. 649, 658, &c.

Apoc. ii. 7. xiii. 18. xvii. 9. Matt. xiii. 9. xxiv. 15. Dan. ix. 1. John v. 39. Luke xxiv. 45. 1 Cor. xii. 10. xiv. 26. Eph. i. 9, 10. Matt. xiii. 13. xi. 25. vii. 6. 1 Cor ii. 8. Acts iii. 17.

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SERM. II. be ſuppoſed neceſſary, that all things ſhould be plainly diſcovered at all times, and to all perſons; it is evident that ſome things are couched in parabolical and myſterious expreſſions; it is particularly the manner of prophetical inſtruction frequently to involve things, the full and clear knowledge of which is not congruous to every reaſon, nor ſuitable to every capacity; but reſerved for times, and perſons, for which the divine wiſdom only knows them moſt proper.

Gal. iv. 4. Eph. i. 10. 1 Tim. ii. 6.

Theſe things being thus premiſed, we com to our particular caſe, and ſay, that (according to what our Lord and his Apoſtles teach) the Meſſiah's being to ſuffer was in divers paſſages of the ancient Scripture prefigured. Suppoſing the thing itſelf determined to be, there are peculiar reaſons, why it rather ſo, than in a more open manner, ſhould be repreſented, contained in thoſe words of Tertullian: *The Sacrament indeed* (ſaith he) *of Chriſt's paſſion ought to have been figured in the* (ancient) *predications; for as much as that the more incredible it was, (if it ſhould have been preached nakedly) the more offenſive it would have been; and the more magnificent it was, the more it was to be overſhadowed, that the difficulty of underſtanding it might be cauſe of ſeeking of God's grace*[u]. Suppoſing it alſo that it ſhould be, it is plain that the paſſages about Abel, Iſaac, Joſias, Jeremiah, and the like, may congruouſly be applied thereto; that the elevation of the Brazen Serpent, and the ſlaying the Paſchal Lamb may appoſitely repreſent it; the Jewiſh prieſts, with all their ſacrifices, may alſo with reaſon be brought in, and accommodated thereto: theſe things indeed by themſelves ſolitarily are not apt peremptorily to evince, that it ſhould be; yet do

[u] Utique ſacramentum paſſionis ipſius figurari in prædicationibus oportuerat, quantoque incredibile, tanto magis ſcandalum futurum, quantoque magnificum, tanto magis adumbrandum; ut difficultas intellectûs gratiam Dei quæreret. *Tert. in Jud.* 10.

they

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they handſomely ſuit it, and adorn the ſuppoſition thereof; according to the notion premiſed about the figurative relation between the matters of the *old* world before the Meſſias, and the *new* one after him. But with a clearer evidence and ſtronger force we may affirm, that the Meſſiah's ſufferings were implied in the afflictions aſcribed to his repreſentative king David, ſuch as he in ſeveral Pſalms (in the 35th, 69th, 109th, 118th, and eſpecially in the 22d Pſalm) deſcribeth them; wherein divers paſſages, expreſſing the extreme ſadneſs and forlornneſs of his condition, occur, which by the hiſtory of his life do not ſo well, according to the literal ſignification of words, appear congruous to his perſon; which therefore there is a neceſſity, or at leaſt much reaſon, that they ſhould be applied to the Meſſias, whom that holy King did repreſent. SERM. II.

Which being admitted, comparing the paſſages we find there to that which befel Jeſus, we may obſerve an admirable harmony; there being ſcarce any part of his affliction in his life, or at any circumſtance thereof at his death, which is not in expreſs and emphatical terms there ſet out. There we have expreſſed his low and deſpicable ſtate; (*I am a worm, and no man; the reproach of men, and deſpiſed of the people;*) Pſal. xxii. 6. —the cauſeleſs hatred and enmity of the populace and of the great ones toward him; (*They that hate me without a cauſe are more than the hairs of my head; they that would deſtroy me, being mine enemies wrongfully, are mighty; they compaſſed me about with words of hatred, and fought againſt me without a cauſe;*) Pſal. lxix. 4. xxxv. 7. cix. 3. —the ingrateful requital for all the good intended and performed by him; (*They rewarded me evil for good, and hatred for my love;*) Pſal. xxxv. 12. cix. 5. —their rejecting him; (*The ſtone which the builders refuſed is become the head ſtone of the corner;*) cxviii. 22. —their inſidious and calumnious proceedings againſt him; (*Without cauſe have they hid for me their net in a pit, which without cauſe they have digged for my ſoul.* And, *falſe witneſſes did riſe up; they laid to* Pſ. xxxv. 7. 11. cix. 2.

my

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SERM. 11. *my charge things that I knew not.* And, *the mouth of the wicked and the mouth of the deceitful are opened againſt me; they have ſpoken againſt me with a lying tongue:)* —their bitter inſulting over him in his affliction;

Pſal. xxxv. 15. lxix. 26. *(But in mine adverſity they rejoiced, and gathered themſelves together; yea the abjects gathered themſelves together againſt me:) They perſecute him, whom thou haſt ſmitten, and they talk to the grief of thoſe, whom thou haſt wounded:* καὶ ἐπὶ τὸ ἄλγος τῶν τραυμάτων μου προσέθηκαν, *and to the ſmart of my wounds they have added;* (ſay the LXX.)—their ſcornful reviling, flouting, and

Pſal. xxii. 7, 8. cix. 25. xxxv. 21. 16. mocking him; *(All they that ſee me, laugh me to ſcorn; they ſhoot the lip, they ſhake the head; ſaying, He truſted in the Lord, that he would deliver him; let him deliver him, ſeeing he delighteth in him.* And, *I became a reproach unto them; when they looked upon me, they ſhaked their heads; they opened their mouth wide againſt me, and ſaid, Aha, aha, our eye hath ſeen it.* Ἐπείρασάν με, ἐξεμυκτήρισάν με μυκτηρισμὸν, ἔβρυξαν ἐπ' ἐμὲ τὸς ὀδόντας αὐτῶν· *They tempted me, they extremely mocked me, they gnaſhed their teeth upon me.)*—their cruel and contemptuous

Pſal. xxii. 16, 17. uſage of him; *(Dogs have compaſſed me; the aſſembly of the wicked have encloſed me; they pierced my hands and my feet; I may tell all my bones; they look and ſtare upon me.)*—their abuſive dealing with him, when he

Pſal. lxix. 21. in his diſtreſs called for ſome refreſhment; *(They gave me gall for my meat, and in my thirſt they gave me vinegar to drink.)*—their diſpoſal of his garments upon

Pſal. xxii. 18. his ſuffering; *(They part my garments among them, and caſt lots upon my veſture.)*—his being deſerted of his friends and followers, and thence deſtitute of all

Pſal. lxix. 8, 20. conſolation; *(I am become a ſtranger to my brethren, and an alien unto my mother's children;—I am full of heavineſs; and I looked for ſome to take pity, but there was none; and for comforters, but I found none.)*—the ſenſe of God's withholding his favour and help;

Pſal. xxii. 1. lxix. 17. *(My God, my God, why haſt thou forſaken me? Why art thou ſo far from helping me?)*—his charitable diſpoſition and demeanor toward his enemies and perſecutors;

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ſecutors; *(But as for me, when they were ſick (when they did trouble me,* ſay the LXX.) *my clothing was ſackcloth, I humbled myſelf with faſting, and my prayer returned into my own boſom; I behaved myſelf as though it had been my friend, or brother; I bowed down heavily, as one that mourneth for his mother.)* Which paſſages, and the like, how patly and punctually they do ſquare to reſpective paſſages in the Goſpels, I need not to ſhew; we do, I preſume, all of us well enough remember that both moſt doleful and comfortable hiſtory, to be able ourſelves to make the application. SERM. II. Ἐν τῇ αἰτίᾳ παρενοχλεῖ μοι. Pſal. xxxv. 13, &c.

But there farther are not only ſuch oblique intimations, or ſignifications of this matter, ſhrowded under the coverture of other perſons and names; but very direct and immediate predictions concerning the Meſſiah's being to ſuffer, moſt clearly expreſſed: that whole famous chapter (the 53d.) of Iſaiah doth moſt evidently and fully declare it, wherein the kind, manner, cauſes, ends, and conſequences of his ſufferings, together with his behaviour under them, are graphically repreſented: his appearing meanneſs, *(He hath no form, or comelineſs; and when we ſhall ſee him, there is no beauty, that we ſhould deſire him:)*—the diſgrace, contempt, repulſes, and rejection he underwent, *(He is deſpiſed and rejected of men—we hid our faces from him; he was deſpiſed, and we eſteemed him not:)*—his afflicted ſtate, *(He is a man of ſorrows, and acquainted with grief; we did eſteem him ſtricken, ſmitten of God, and afflicted:)*—the bitter and painful manner of his affliction (He *was ſtricken*; he *bare ſtripes*; he *was wounded and bruiſed:)*—his being accuſed, adjudged, and condemned as a malefactor, *(He was taken from priſon, and from judgment—he was numbered among the tranſgreſſors:)*—his death conſequent, *(He poured out his ſoul unto death; he was cut out of the land of the living:)*—the deſign and end of his ſufferings; they were appointed and inflicted by divine Providence for our ſake, and in our ſtead; for the expiation of our ſins, and our ſalvation; *(It pleaſed the* Iſa. liii. v. 2. v. 3. v. 3, 4. v. 4. 5, v. 8. 12. v. 10.

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SERM. II. *the Lord to bruise him; he hath put him to grief—when thou shalt make his soul an offering for sin—he was wounded for our transgressions, he was bruised for our iniquities: the chastisement of our peace was upon him, and with his stripes we are healed—surely he hath borne our griefs, and carried our sorrows—for the transgression of my people he was stricken—the Lord hath laid on him the iniquities of us all:)*—his sustaining all this with a willing, quiet, humble patience, and perfect meekness, *(He was oppressed, and he was afflicted, yet he opened not his mouth; he is brought as a lamb to the slaughter, and as a sheep before her shearers is dumb, so he openeth not his mouth:)*—his charitable praying for his persecutors, and designing their welfare, *(He made intercession for the transgressors:)*—the blessed consequences and happy success of his sufferings, in the conversion and justification of men; in performing God's will and work; in being satisfied, rewarded, and exalted himself, *(He shall see his seed, he shall prolong his days, and the pleasure of the Lord shall prosper in his hand; he shall see of the travail of his soul, and shall be satisfied; by his knowledge shall my righteous servant justify many;—I will divide him a portion with the great, and he shall divide the spoil with the strong:)* which passages, as they do most exactly suit unto Jesus, and might in a sort constitute a true historical narration of what he did endure, together with the doctrines delivered in the Gospel concerning the intents and effects of his sufferings, so that they did, according to the intention of the divine Spirit, relate to the Messias, may from several considerations be made apparent; the context and coherence of all this passage with the matters precedent and subsequent, the which plainly do respect the Messias, and his times, do argue it: *How beautiful upon the mountains are the feet of him, that bringeth good tidings!* and, *Behold my servant shall deal prudently, &c.* are passages immediately going before; to which this chapter is knit in way of continuation; and immediately

Isa. liii. 5. 4. 8. 6. 12.
v. 7.
v. 12.
v. 10, 11, 12.
Isa. lii. 7. 13.

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mediately after it doth follow, *Sing, O barren, thou, that didſt not bear, &c.* being a no leſs perſpicuous than elegant deſcription of the Church, enlarged by acceſſion of the Gentiles, which was to be brought to paſs by the Meſſias. The general ſcope of this whole prophecy enforceth the ſame concluſion; and the incongruity of this particular prediction to any other perſon imaginable beſide the Meſſias doth farther evince it; ſo high are the things aſcribed to the ſuffering perſon; as that he ſhould *bear the ſins of all God's people, and heal them*; that he ſhould *by his knowledge juſtify many* (or the multitude); that *the pleaſure of the Lord ſhould proſper in his hand* to theſe grand purpoſes; that God would *divide him a portion with the great, and that he ſhould divide the ſpoil with the ſtrong*: the magnificence and importance of which ſayings (rightly underſtood and weighed) do well agree to the Meſſias, but not to any other perſon, or ſimple man: whence if the ancient Jews had reaſon to believe a Meſſias was to come, (as they with general conſent did ſuppoſe they had) they had as much reaſon to apply this place, as any other, to him, and thence to acknowledge that he was deſigned to be an eminent ſufferer. And indeed divers of the ancient Targumiſts and moſt learned Rabbins did expound this place of the one Meſſias, which was to come; as the *Pugio fidei*, and other learned Writers do by ſeveral expreſs teſtimonies declare. This place alſo diſcovereth the vanity of that figment, deviſed by ſome later Jews; who, to evade it, and to oppoſe Jeſus, have affirmed there was to be a double Meſſias; one, who ſhould be much afflicted; another, who ſhould greatly proſper; ſince we may obſerve, that here both great afflictions and glorious performances concurrently are aſcribed to the ſame perſon.

SERM. II. Iſa. liv. 1, &c.

The ſame things are by parts alſo clearly foretold in other places of this Prophet, and in other prophetical Scriptures: by Iſaiah again in the chapter immediately

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SERM. II. immediately preceding, *Behold* (ſaith God there) *my ſervant ſhall deal prudently; he ſhall be exalted, and extolled, and be very high:* there is God's ſervant (he, who in way of excellency is ſuch, that is, in the ſtyle of this Prophet, the Meſſias) in his real glorious capacity: it followeth concerning his external appearance; *His viſage was ſo marred more than any man's, and his form more than the ſons of men:* And again, in the 49th chapter; *Thus ſaith the Lord, the Redeemer of Iſrael, and his Holy One; To him, whom man deſpiſeth, to him, whom the nation abhorreth, to a ſervant of rulers, kings ſhall ſee and ariſe, princes alſo ſhall worſhip:* What can be more expreſs and clear, than that it is ſignified here, that the Meſſias, who ſhould ſubject the world, with its ſovereign powers, to the acknowledgment and veneration of himſelf, was to be deſpiſed by men, to be deteſted by the Jewiſh people, to appear in a ſervile and baſe condition? The ſame Prophet doth again, in the 50th chapter, bring him in ſpeaking thus: *I gave my back to the ſmiters, and my cheeks to them that plucked off the hair; I hid not my face from ſhame and ſpitting.* His offending the Jews, ſo as thereby to aggravate their ſins, and accelerate their puniſhments, is alſo thus expreſſed by the ſame Prophet: *And he ſhall be for a ſanctuary: but for a ſtone of ſtumbling, and for a rock of offence to both the houſes of Iſrael, for a gin and for a ſnare to the inhabitants of Jeruſalem.*

Iſa. liii. 13, 14. Iſa. xlix. 7. Iſa. l. 6. Iſa. viii. 14. (Pſal. ii. 2.)

The Prophet Zechariah doth alſo in ſeveral places very roundly expreſs his ſufferings, his low condition in thoſe words; *Behold thy King cometh unto thee lowly, and riding upon an aſs;* (that is, *pauper*, mean and ſorry to appearance.) His manner of death in thoſe words: *Awake, O ſword, againſt my ſhepherd, and againſt the man that is my fellow, ſaith the Lord of hoſts; ſmite the ſhepherd, and the ſheep ſhall be ſcattered.* And again; *I will pour upon the houſe of David, and upon the inhabitants of Jeruſalem, the ſpirit of grace and of ſupplications, and they ſhall look upon me, whom*

Zech. ix. 9. Zech. xiii. 7. Zech. xii. 10.

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SERM. II.

whom they have pierced, and they ſhall mourn, &c. Thes Prophet Daniel alſo in that place, from which probably the name Meſſias was taken, and which moſt expreſsly mentioneth him, ſaith, that *after ſixty-two weeks the Meſſias ſhall be cut off, but not for himſelf.* Now from all theſe paſſages of Scripture (beſide divers others to the ſame purpoſe, obſervable by thoſe, whoſe induſtry is aſſiſted by divine illumination) we may well conclude with our Lord, Ὅτι οὕτω γέγραπται, καὶ οὕτως ἔδει παθεῖν τὸν Χριστόν· *that thus it was written, and thus* (according to the Prophet's foreſhewing) *it was to happen, that Chriſt ſhould ſuffer*; ſuffer in a life of penury and diſgrace, in a death of ſorrow and ſhame.

Dan. ix. 26.

Luke xxiv. 46.

That it was to fall out thus, might alſo be well inferred, by reaſons grounded upon the qualities of the Meſſiah's perſon, and upon the nature of his performances, ſuch as they are deſcribed in prophetical Scripture: he was to be really, and plainly to appear, a perſon of moſt admirable virtue and goodneſs; but never (as even Pagan philoſophers have obſerved) was, or can there be any ſuch without undergoing the trial of great affliction. He was to be an univerſal pattern to men of all ſorts (eſpecially to the greateſt part of men, that is, to the poor and afflicted) of *all righteouſneſs*; to exemplify particularly the moſt difficult pieces of duty; *(humility, patience, meekneſs, charity, ſelf-denial, entire reſignation* to God's will:) this he ſhould not have had opportunity or advantage of doing, ſhould he have been high, wealthy, ſplendid, and proſperous in ſecular matters: he was to exerciſe great pity and ſympathy toward all mankind; toward the doing which it was requiſite that he ſhould himſelf taſte and feel the inconveniences, troubles, pains, and ſorrows incident to us. He was to advance the repute of ſpiritual goods, and eternal bleſſings, depreſſing the value of thoſe corporeal and temporal things, which men do ſo fondly admire and dote on: the moſt compendious

Plato, Seneca, &c.

Vide Theodoti Orat. in Eph. 1. Concil. p. 997.

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SERM. II. and effectual way of doing which was by an exemplary neglect or rejection of worldly glories and enjoyments; refuſing the honours, profits, and pleaſures here, adjoined to a high ſtate. He was by the moſt kindly, gentle, and peaceable means to erect a ſpiritual kingdom; by pure force of reaſon to ſubdue the hearts and conſciences of men, to the love and obedience of God; by wiſe inſtruction to raiſe in us the hopes of future recompences in heaven; to the accompliſhment of which purpoſes temporal glory (working on the carnal apprehenſions and affections of men) had rather been prejudicial than conducible. He was to accompliſh and manage his great deſigns by means ſupernatural and divine, the which would ſurely become more conſpicuous by the viſible meanneſs and impotency of his ſtate. He was alſo moſt highly to merit from God, for himſelf, and for us; (to merit God's high approbation of what he did, God's favour and grace to us;) this he could not perform ſo well, as by willingly enduring, for God's ſake, and in our behalf, the moſt hard and grievous things. He was, in fine, deſigned *perfectly to ſave us*, and conſequently to appeaſe God's wrath, to ſatisfy divine juſtice, to expiate our ſins; whereto it was requiſite, that he ſhould undergo what we had deſerved, being puniſhed and afflicted for us.

Now that Jeſus our Lord did moſt thoroughly correſpond to whatever is in this kind declared by the Prophets concerning the Meſſias, we need not, by minutely relating the known hiſtory of his life and death, make out any farther, ſince the whole matter is palpably notorious, and no adverſary can deny it: I ſhall therefore conclude, that it is a clear and certain truth, which St. Peter in our text affirmeth, that, *Thoſe things which God before had ſhewed by the mouth of all his Prophets, that Chriſt ſhould ſuffer, he hath ſo fulfilled.*

Apoc. i. 5. Now, *Unto him that loved us, and waſhed us from our ſins*

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ſins in his own blood, and hath made us Kings and SERM.
Prieſts unto God, and his Father; to him be glory II.
and dominion for ever and ever. Amen.

Bleſſing, and honour, and glory, and power, be unto him Apoc. v. 13.
that ſitteth upon the throne, and unto the Lamb for
ever and ever. Amen.

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SERMON III.

Upon the Paſſion of our bleſſed Saviour.

PHIL. ii. 8.

And being found in faſhion as a man, he humbled himſelf, and became obedient unto death, even the death of the croſs.

SERM. III.

WHEN, in conſequence of the original apoſtaſy from God, which did baniſh us from paradiſe, and by continued rebellions againſt him, inevitable to our corrupt and impotent nature, mankind had forfeited the amity of God, (the chief of all goods, the fountain of all happineſs,) and had incurred his diſpleaſure, (the greateſt of all evils, the foundation of all miſery;)

Cyril. c. Jul. viii. p. 278. ix. p. 303. John iii. 36. Col. iii. 6.

When poor man having deſerted his natural lord and protector, *other lords had got dominion over him*, ſo that he was captivated by the foul, malicious, cruel ſpirits, and enſlaved to his own vain mind, to vile luſts, to wild paſſions:

Iren. iii. 33, 34. Iſa. xxvi. 13. Iren. iii. 8.

When, according to an eternal rule of juſtice, that ſin deſerveth puniſhment, and by an expreſs law, wherein death was enacted to the tranſgreſſors of God's command, the root of our ſtock, and conſequently all its branches, ſtood adjudged to utter deſtruction:

Gen. iv. 7. ii. 17. Iren. v. 16.

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SERM. III.

When, according to St. Paul's expreſſions, *all the world was become guilty before God*, (or, ſubjected to God's judgment :) *all men* (Jews and Gentiles) *were under ſin, under condemnation, under the curſe*; *all men were concluded into diſobedience*, and *ſhut up together* (as cloſe priſoners) *under ſin*; *all men had ſinned, and come ſhort of the glory of God: death had paſſed over all, becauſe all had ſinned:*

Rom. iii. 19. ὑπόδικος τῷ Θεῷ. Rom. iii. 9. v. 16, 18. Gal. iii. 10. Rom. xi. 32. εἰς ἀπείθειαν.

When for us, being plunged into ſo wretched a condition, no viſible remedy did appear, no poſſible redreſs could be obtained here below: (for what means could we have of recovering God's favour, who were apt perpetually to contract new debts and guilts, but not able to diſcharge any old ſcores? What capacity of mind or will had we to entertain mercy, who were no leſs ſtubbornly perverſe and obdurate in our crimes, than ignorant or infirm? How could we be reconciled unto Heaven, who had an innate antipathy to God and goodneſs? [*Sin* (according to our natural ſtate, and ſecluding evangelical grace) *reigning in our mortal bodies, no good thing dwelling in us*; there being a predominant *law in our members, warring againſt the law of our mind, and bringing us into captivity to the law of ſin*; a main ingredient of our *old man* being a *carnal mind*, which is *enmity to God*, and *cannot ſubmit to his law*; we being *alienated from the life of God by the blindneſs of our hearts*, and *enemies in our minds by wicked works*:] How could we revive to any good hope, who were *dead in treſpaſſes and ſins*, God having withdrawn his quickening ſpirit? How at leaſt could we for one moment ſtand upright in God's ſight, upon the natural terms, excluding all ſin, and exacting perfect obedience?)

Gal. iii. 22. Rom. iii. 23. v. 12. Rom. vi. 12. 14. 20. 22. Rom. vii. 18. 5. Rom. vii. 23. Rom. vi. 6. Coloſſ. iii. 9. Epheſ. iv. 22. Rom. viii. 7. οὐχ ὑποτάσσεται. Epheſ. iv. 18. Coloſſ. i. 21. Rom. v. 10. Epheſ. ii. 5. (Rom. vi. 13. 11.)

When this, I ſay, was our forlorn and deſperate caſe, then Almighty God, out of his infinite goodneſs, was pleaſed to look upon us (as he ſometime did upon *Jeruſalem, lying polluted in her blood*) with an eye of pity and mercy, ſo as graciouſly to deſign a re-

Pſal. cxliii. 2. Exod. xxxiv. 7. Ezek. xvi. 6.

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redemption for us out of all that woeful distress: and no sooner by his incomprehensible wisdom did he foresee we should lose ourselves, than by his immense grace he did conclude to restore us. SERM. III.

But how could this happy design well be compassed? How in consistence with the glory, with the justice, with the truth of God, could such enemies be reconciled, such offenders be pardoned, such wretches be saved? Would the omnipotent Majesty, so affronted, design to treat with his rebels immediately, without an intercessor, or advocate? Would the sovereign Governor of the world suffer thus notoriously his right to be violated, his authority to be slighted, his honour to be trampled on, without some notable vindication or satisfaction? Would the great Patron of justice relax the terms of it, or ever permit a gross breach thereof to pass with impunity? Would the immutable God of truth expose his veracity or his constancy to suspicion, by so reversing that peremptory sentence of death upon sinners, that it should not in a sort eminently be accomplished? Would the most righteous and most holy God let slip an opportunity so advantageous for demonstrating his perfect love of innocence, and abhorrence of iniquity? Could we therefore well be cleared from our guilt without an expiation, or reinstated in freedom without a ransom, or exempted from condemnation without some punishment?

Eph. i. 4. 9. 11. & iii. 11. 2 Tim. i. 9. 1 Pet. i. 20. Rev. xiii. 8. Rom. xvi. 25. Tit. i. 2. Athan. de Incarn Gen. ii. 17.

No: God was so pleased to prosecute his designs of goodness and mercy, as thereby nowise to impair or obscure, but rather to advance and illustrate the glories of his sovereign dignity, of his severe justice, of his immaculate holiness, of his unchangeable steadiness in word and purpose. He accordingly would be sued to for peace and mercy: nor would he grant them absolutely, without due compensations for the wrongs he had sustained; yet so, that his goodness did find us a Mediator, and furnish us with means to satisfy him. He would not condescend

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SERM. III.

ſcend to a ſimple remiſſion of our debts; yet ſo, that, ſaving his right and honour, he did ſtoop lower for an effectual abolition of them. He would make good his word, not to let our treſpaſſes go unpuniſhed; yet ſo, that by our puniſhment we might receive advantage. He would manifeſt his deteſtation of wickedneſs in a way more illuſtrious, than if he had perſecuted it down to hell, and irreverſibly doomed it to endleſs torment.

But how might theſe things be effected? Where was there a Mediator proper and worthy to intercede for us? Who could preſume to ſolicit and plead in our behalf? Who ſhould dare to put himſelf between God and us, and offer to ſcreen mankind from the divine wrath and vengeance? Who had ſo great an intereſt in the court of heaven, as to ingratiate ſuch a brood of apoſtate enemies thereto? Who could aſſume the confidence to propoſe terms of reconciliation, or to agitate a new covenant, wherewith God might be ſatisfied, and whereby we might be ſaved? Where, in heaven or earth, could there be found a prieſt fit to atone for ſins ſo vaſtly numerous, ſo extremely heinous? And whence ſhould a ſacrifice be taken, of value ſufficient to expiate for ſo manifold enormities, committed againſt the infinite Majeſty of Heaven? Who could *find out the everlaſting redemption* of innumerable ſouls, or lay down a competent ranſom for them all? Not to ſay, could alſo purchaſe for them eternal life and bliſs?

Αἰωνίαν λύτρωσιν εὑράμενος. Heb. ix. 12.

Theſe are queſtions, which would puzzle all the wit of man, yea, would gravel all the wiſdom of angels to reſolve: for plain it is, that no creature on earth, none in heaven, could well undertake or perform this work.

Where on earth, among the degenerate ſons of Adam, could be found *ſuch an high prieſt as became us, holy, harmleſs, undefiled, ſeparate from ſinners?* and how could a man, however innocent and pure as a ſeraphim, ſo perform his duty, as to do more than merit

Heb. vii. 26.

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merit or satisfy for himself? How many lives could the life of one man serve to ransom; seeing that it is asserted of the greatest and richest among men, that *None of them can by any means redeem his brother, or give to God a ransom for him.* SERM. III. Psal. xlix. 7.

And how could available help in this case be expected from any of the angelical host; seeing (beside their being in nature different from us, and thence improper to merit or satisfy for us; beside their comparative meanness, and infinite distance from the majesty of God,) they are but our fellow-servants, and have obligations to discharge for themselves, and cannot be solvent for more than for their own debts of gratitude and service to their infinitely-bountiful Creator; they also themselves needing a Saviour, to preserve them by his grace in their happy state?

Indeed, no creature might aspire to so august an honour, none could atchieve so marvellous a work, as to redeem from infinite guilt and misery the noblest part of all the visible creation: none could presume to invade that high prerogative of God, or attempt to infringe the truth of that reiterated proclamation, *I, even I, am the Lord, and beside me there is no Saviour.* Isa. xliii. 11. xlv. 21. Hos. xiii. 4.

Wherefore, seeing that a supereminent dignity of person was required in our Mediator, and that an immense value was to be presented for our ransom; seeing that *God saw there was no man, and wondered* (or took special notice) *that there was no intercessor*; it must be *his arm* alone that could *bring salvation*; none beside God himself could intermeddle therein. Isa. lix. 16. ἐκπεπώκει, LXX.

But how could God undertake the business? Could he become a suitor or intercessor to his offended self? Could he present a sacrifice, or disburse a satisfaction to his own justice? Could God alone contract and stipulate with God in our behalf? No; surely man also must concur in the transaction: some amends must issue from him, somewhat must be paid out of our stock: human will and consent must

SERM. III. must be interpoſed, to ratify a firm covenant with us, inducing obligation on our part. It was decent and expedient, that as man, by wilful tranſgreſſion and preſumptuous ſelf-pleaſing, had ſo highly offended, injured, and diſhonoured his Maker; ſo man alſo, by willing obedience, and patient ſubmiſſion to God's pleaſure, ſhould greatly content, right, and glorify him.

Ephes. i. 8. Luke i. 78. Ephes. i. 5. Tit. iii. 4. Rom. v. 8. Gal. iv. 4. John vi. 38. Heb. x. 7. John i. 14. Heb. v. 2. iv. 15. Ephes. i. 6. Conſt. Apoſt. viii. 12. 1 Tim. ii. 6. Tit. ii. 14. Heb. ix. 15. ii. 9. Col. i. 22.

Here then did lie the ſtreſs; this was the knot, which only divine wiſdom could looſe. And ſo indeed it did in a moſt effectual and admirable way; for in correſpondence to all the exigences of the caſe, (that God and man both might act their parts in ſaving us) the bleſſed eternal Word, the only Son of God, by the good-will of his Father, did vouchſafe to intercede for us, and to undertake our redemption; in order thereto voluntarily being ſent down from heaven, aſſuming human fleſh, ſubjecting himſelf to all the infirmities of our frail nature, and to the worſt inconveniences of our low condition; therein meriting God's favour to us, by a perfect obedience to the law, and ſatisfying God's juſtice by a moſt patient endurance of pains in our behalf; in completion of all, willingly laying down his life for the ranſom of our ſouls, and pouring forth his blood in ſacrifice for our ſins.

1 Tim. iii. 16.

This is that great and wonderful *myſtery of godlineſs*, (or of our holy religion) the which St. Paul here doth expreſs, in theſe words concerning our bleſſed Saviour; *Who being in the form of God, thought it no robbery to be equal with God; but made himſelf of no reputation, and took upon him the form of a ſervant, and was made in the likeneſs of men: and being found in faſhion as a man, he humbled himſelf, and became obedient unto death, even the death of the croſs.*

In which words are contained divers points very obſervable. But ſeeing the time will not allow me to treat on them in any meaſure as they deſerve, I ſhall (waving all the reſt) inſiſt but upon one particular,

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cular, couched in the laſt words, *Even the death of the croſs* [a]; which by a ſpecial emphaſis do excite us to conſider the manner of that holy paſſion, which we now commemorate; the contemplation whereof, as it is moſt ſeaſonable, ſo it is ever very profitable. SERM. III.

[a] Εσταυρω μι ςαυρῳ.

Now then in this kind of paſſion we may conſider divers notable adjuncts; namely theſe: 1. Its being in appearance criminal. 2. Its being moſt bitter and painful. 3. Its being moſt ignominious and ſhameful. 4. Its peculiar advantageouſneſs to the deſigns of our Lord in ſuffering. 5. Its practical efficacy.

I. We may conſider our Lord's ſuffering as criminal; or as in ſemblance being an execution of juſtice upon him. *He* (as the Prophet foretold of him) *was numbered among the tranſgreſſors*; and God (ſaith St. Paul) *made him ſin for us, who knew no ſin*: that is, God ordered him to be treated as a moſt ſinful or criminous perſon, who in himſelf was perfectly innocent, and void of the leaſt inclination to offend.

Iſa. liii. 12. 2 Cor. v. 21.

So in effect it was, that he was impeached of the higheſt crimes; as a violator of the divine laws in divers inſtances; as a deſigner to ſubvert their religion and temple; as an impoſtor, deluding and ſeducing the people; as a blaſphemer, aſſuming to himſelf the properties and prerogatives of God; as a ſeditious and rebellious perſon, *perverting the nation*, inhibiting payments of tribute to Cæſar, uſurping royal authority, and ſtyling himſelf *Chriſt a king*: in a word, as a malefactor, or one guilty of enormous offences; ſo his perſecutors avowed to Pilate, *If*, ſaid they, *he were not a malefactor, we would not have delivered him up unto thee*. As ſuch he was repreſented and arraigned; as ſuch, although by a ſentence wreſted by malicious importunity, againſt the will and conſcience of the judge, he was condemned, and accordingly ſuffered death.

John v. 18. x. 30, &c. vii. 12. Matt. xxvi. 61. xxvii. 40. Luke xxiii. 2. Matt. xxvii. 63. Conſt. Apoſt. v. 14. κακοποιός. John xviii. 30.

Now whereas any death or paſſion of our Lord, as being in itſelf immenſely valuable, and moſt precious in the ſight of God, might have been ſufficient toward

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SERM. III. toward the accompliſhment of his general deſigns, (the appeaſing God's wrath, the ſatisfaction of divine juſtice, the expiation of our guilt;) it may be enquired, why God ſhould thus expoſe him, or why he ſhould chooſe to ſuffer under this odious and ugly character[x]? Which enquiry is the more conſiderable, becauſe it is eſpecially this circumſtance which croſſeth the fleſhly ſenſe and worldly prejudices of men, ſo as to have rendered the Goſpel offenſive to the ſuperſtitious Jews, and deſpicable to conceited Gentiles. For ſo Tryphon in Juſtin Martyr, although, from conviction by teſtimonies of Scripture, he did admit the Meſſias was to ſuffer *hardly*, yet that it ſhould be in this *accurſed* manner, he could not digeſt. So the great adverſaries of Chriſtianity (Celſus, Porphyry, Julian) did with moſt contempt urge this exception againſt it. So St. Paul did obſerve, that *Chriſt crucified was unto the Jews a ſtumbling-block, and unto the Greeks fooliſhneſs*. Wherefore to avoid thoſe ſcandals, and that we may better admire the wiſdom of God in this diſpenſation, it may be fit to aſſign ſome reaſons intimated in holy Scripture, or bearing conformity to its doctrine, why it was thus ordered. Such are theſe.

Orig. c. Celſ. ii. p. 83. vii. p. 368. Aug. de Civ. D. 10. 28. Cyril. c. Jul. vi. p. 194.

1 Cor. i. 23.

1. As our Saviour freely did undertake a life of greateſt meanneſs and hardſhip, ſo upon the like accounts he might be pleaſed to undergo a death moſt loathſome and uncomfortable. There is nothing to man's nature (eſpecially to the beſt natures, in which modeſty and ingenuity do ſurvive,) more abominable than ſuch a death. God for good purpoſes hath planted in our conſtitution a quick ſenſe of diſgrace; and, of all diſgraces, that which proceedeth from an imputation of crimes is moſt pungent; and being conſcious of our innocence doth heighten the

[x] Cur ſi Deus fuit, et mori voluit, non ſaltem honeſto aliquo mortis genere affectus eſt? &c. *Lact.* 4. 26. *Juſt. M. Dial.* p. 317.

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ſmart; and to reflect upon ourſelves dying under it, leaving the world with an indelible ſtain upon our name and memory, is yet more grievous. Even to languiſh by degrees, enduring the torments of a long, however ſharp diſeaſe, would to an honeſt mind ſeem more eligible, than in this manner, being reputed and handled as a villain, to find a quick and eaſy diſpatch. SERM. III.

Of which human reſentment may we not obſerve a touch in that expoſtulation, *Be ye come out as againſt a thief with ſwords and ſtaves?* If as a man he did not like to be proſecuted as a thief; yet willingly did he chooſe it, as he did other moſt diſtaſteful things, pertaining to our nature, *(the likeneſs of man)* and incident to that low condition, *(the form of a ſervant)* into which he did put himſelf: ſuch as were, to endure penury, and to fare hardly, to be ſlighted, envied, hated, reproached through all his courſe of life. Luke xxii. 52. Matt. xxvi. 55.

It is well ſaid by a Pagan philoſopher, that *No man doth expreſs ſuch a reſpect and devotion to virtue, as doth he who forfeiteth the repute of being a good man, that he may not loſe the conſcience of being ſuch*[y]. This our Lord willingly made his caſe, being content not only to expoſe his life, but to proſtitute his fame, for the intereſts of goodneſs.

Had he died otherwiſe, he might have ſeemed to purchaſe our welfare at a ſomewhat eaſier rate; he had not been ſo complete a ſufferer; he had not taſted the worſt that man is liable to endure: there had been a comfort in ſeeming innocent, detracting from the perfection of his ſufferance.

Whereas therefore he often was in hazard of death, both from the clandeſtine machinations and the outrageous violences of thoſe who maligned him, John v. 18. viii. 37. 40. 59. vii. 1. 19. 25. x. 32. 39.

[y] Nemo mihi videtur pluris æſtimare virtutem, nemo illi magis eſſe devotus, quam qui boni viri famam perdidit, ne conſcientiam perderet. *Sen. Ep.* 81.

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SERM. III. he did induſtriouſly ſhun a death ſo plauſible, and honourable, if I may ſo ſpeak; it being not ſo diſgraceful to fall by private malice, or by ſudden rage, as by the ſolemn deliberate proceeding of men in public authority and principal credit.

Accordingly this kind of death did not fall upon him by ſurpriſe, or by chance; but he did *from the beginning* foreſee it; he plainly with ſatisfaction did aim at it: he (as it is related in the Goſpels) did *ſhew* his diſciples, that it was incumbent on him by God's appointment and his own choice; that *he ought* (it is ſaid) *to ſuffer many things, to be rejected by the chief prieſts, elders, and ſcribes, to be vilified by them, to be delivered up to the Gentiles, to be mocked and ſcourged, and crucified*, as a flagitious ſlave. Thus would our bleſſed Saviour, in conformity to the reſt of his voluntary afflictions, and for a conſummation of them, not only ſuffer in his body by ſore wounds and bruiſes, and in his ſoul by doleful agonies, but in his name alſo and reputation by the fouleſt ſcandals; undergoing as well all the infamy as the infirmity which did belong to us, or might befal us: thus meaning by all means thoroughly to expreſs his charity, and exerciſe his compaſſion towards us; thus advancing his merit, and diſcharging the utmoſt ſatisfaction in our behalf.

John vi. 64. Matt. xvi. 21. Luke ix. 22. xviii. 32, 33. Mark ix. 31.

2. Death paſſing on him as a malefactor by public ſentence, did beſt ſuit to the nature of his undertaking, was moſt congruous to his intent, did moſt aptly repreſent what he was doing, and imply the reaſon of his performance. For we all are guilty in a moſt high degree, and in a manner very notorious; the fouleſt ſhame, together with the ſharpeſt pain, is due to us for affronting our glorious Maker; we deſerve an open condemnation and exemplary puniſhment: wherefore he, undertaking in our ſtead to bear all, and fully to ſatisfy for us, was pleaſed to undergo the like judgment and uſage; being termed, being treated as we ſhould have been, in quality of an

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an heinous malefactor, as we in truth are. What we had really acted in diſhonouring and uſurping upon God, in diſordering the world, in perverting others, that was imputed to him; and the puniſhment due to that guilt was inflicted on him. *All we like ſheep have gone aſtray, we have turned every one to his own way; and the Lord hath laid on him the iniquities of us all.* He therefore did not only ſuſtain an equivalent pain for us, but in a ſort did bear an equal blame with us, before God and man. SERM. III. Iſa. liii. 6.

3. Seeing, *by the determinate counſel of God*, it was appointed that our Lord ſhould die for us, and that not in a natural, but violent way, ſo as perfectly to ſatisfy God's juſtice, to vindicate his honour, to evidence both his indignation againſt ſin, and willingneſs to be appeaſed; it was moſt fit that affair ſhould be tranſacted in a way, wherein God's right is moſt nearly concerned, and his providence moſt plainly diſcernible; wherein it ſhould be moſt apparent that God did exact and inflict the puniſhment, that our Lord did freely yield to it, and ſubmiſſively undergo it, upon thoſe very accounts. All *judgment* (as Moſes of old did ſay) *is God's*, or is adminiſtered by authority derived from him, in his name, for his intereſt; all magiſtrates being his officers and inſtruments, whereby he governeth and ordereth the world, his natural kingdom: whence that which is acted in way of formal judgment by perſons in authority, God himſelf may be deemed in a more ſpecial and immediate manner to execute it, as being done by his commiſſion, in his ſtead, on his behalf, with his peculiar ſuperintendence. It was therefore in our Lord a ſignal act of deference to God's authority and juſtice, becoming the perſon ſuſtained by him of our Mediator and Proxy, to undergo ſuch a judgment, and ſuch a puniſhment; whereby he received a doom as it were from God's own mouth, uttered by his miniſters, and bare the ſtroke of juſtice from God's hand, repreſented by his inſtruments. Whence Acts ii. 23. Deut. i. 17.

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SERM. III. very ſeaſonably and patiently did he reply to Pilate, *Thou hadſt no power over me,* (or *againſt me*) *except it were given thee from above:* implying that it was in regard to the originally ſupreme authority of God his father, and to his particular appointment upon this occaſion, that our Saviour did then frankly ſubject himſelf to thoſe inferior powers, as to the proper miniſters of divine juſtice. Had he ſuffered in any other way, by the private malice or paſſion of men, God's ſpecial providence in that caſe had been leſs viſible, and our Lord's obedience not ſo remarkable. And if he muſt die by public hands, it muſt be as a criminal, under a pretence of guilt and demerit; there muſt be a formal proceſs, how full ſoever of mockery and outrage; there muſt be teſtimonies produced, how void ſoever of truth or probability; there muſt be a ſentence pronounced, although moſt corrupt and injurious: for no man is in this way perſecuted, without colour of deſert: otherwiſe it would ceaſe to be public authority, and become lawleſs violence; the perſecutor then would put off the face of a magiſtrate, and appear as a cut-throat, or a robber.

John xix. 11. καὶ ἐμοῦ.

4. In fine, our Saviour hardly with ſuch advantage, in any other way, could have diſplayed all kinds of virtue and goodneſs, to the honour of God, to the edification of men, to the furtherance of our ſalvation.

The judgment-hall, with all the paſſages leading him thither, and thence to execution, attended with guards of ſoldiers, amidſt the crowds and clamours of people, were as ſo many theatres, on which he had opportune convenience, in the full eye of the world, to act divers parts of ſublimeſt virtue: to expreſs his inſuperable conſtancy, in atteſting truth, and maintaining a good conſcience; his meekneſs, in calmly bearing the greateſt wrongs; his patience, in contentedly enduring the ſaddeſt adverſities; his entire reſignation to the will and providence of God; his

John xviii. 37. 1 Tim. vi. 13.

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his peaceable ſubmiſſion to the law and power of man; his admirable charity, in pitying, in excuſing, in obliging thoſe by his good wiſhes, and earneſt prayers for their pardon, who in a manner ſo injurious, ſo deſpiteful, ſo cruel, did perſecute him, yea, in gladly ſuffering all this from their hands for their ſalvation; his unſhakeable faith in God, and unalterable love toward him, under ſo fierce a trial, ſo dreadful a temptation. All theſe excellent virtues and graces, by the matter being thus ordered, in a degree moſt eminent, and in a manner very conſpicuous, were demonſtrated to the praiſe of God's name, and the commendation of his truth; for the ſettlement of our faith and hope, for an inſtruction and an encouragement to us of good practice in thoſe higheſt inſtances of virtue. SERM. III.

It is a paſſable notion among the moſt eminent Pagan ſages, that no very exemplary virtue can well appear otherwiſe than in notable misfortune. Whence it is ſaid in Plato, that to approve a man heartily *righteous, he muſt be ſcourged, tortured, bound, have his two eyes burnt out, and in the cloſe, having ſuffered all evils, muſt be impaled*, or crucified [z]. And, *It was*, ſaith Seneca, *the cup of poiſon which made Socrates a great man*, and *which out of priſon did transfer him to heaven*, or did procure to him that lofty eſteem [a], affording him opportunity to ſignalize his conſtancy, his equanimity, his unconcernedneſs for this world and life. And, *The virtue*, ſaith he again, *and the innocence of Rutilius would have lain hid, if it had not*

[z] Magnum exemplum niſi mala fortuna non invenit. *Sen. de Prov. c.* 3.

Ὁ δικαιος μαστιγώσει, στρεβλώσεται, δεθήσει, ἐκκαυθήσεται τὼ ὀφθαλμώ, τελευτῶν πάντα κακὰ παθὼν ἀνασχινδυλευθήσεται. *Plat. de Rep.* 2.

[a] Cicuta magnum Socratem fecit. *Sen. Ep.* 13.

Calix venenatus, qui Socratem tranſtulit e carcere in cœlum. *Sen. Ep.* 67.

Æqualis fuit in tanta inæqualitate fortunæ, &c. *Sen. Ep.* 104.

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SERM. III. (by condemnation and exile) *received injury; while it was violated, it brightly ſhone forth*[b]. And he that ſaid this of others, was himſelf in nothing ſo illuſtrious, as in handſomely entertaining that death to which he was by the bloody tyrant adjudged. And generally, the moſt honourable perſons in the judgment of poſterity for gallant worth, to this very end (as ſuch philoſophers teach) were by divine providence delivered up to ſuffer opprobrious condemnations and puniſhments, by the ungrateful malignity of their times. So that the Greeks, in conſiſtence with their own wiſdom and experience, could not reaſonably ſcorn that croſs which our good Lord (did not only, as did their beſt worthies, by forcible accidental conſtraint undergo, but) adviſedly by free choice did undertake, to recommend the moſt excellent virtues to imitation, and to promote the moſt noble deſigns that could be, by its influence.

Sen. de Prov. 3, 3. &c. Plut. de Stoic. Contr. Ep. 193.

So great reaſon there was, that our Lord ſhould thus ſuffer as a criminal.

II. We may conſider, that in that kind his ſuffering was moſt bitter and painful. Eaſily we may imagine what acerbity of pain muſt be endured by our Lord, in his tender limbs being ſtretched forth, racked, and tentered, and continuing for a good time in ſuch a poſture; by the *piercing his hands and his feet*, parts very nervous and exquiſitely ſenſible, with ſharp nails, (ſo that, as it is ſaid of Joſeph, *the iron entered into his ſoul*;) by abiding expoſed to the injuries of the ſun ſcorching, the wind beating, the weather ſearching his grievous wounds and ſores. Such a pain it was; and that no ſtupifying, no tranſient pain, but one both very acute and lingering: for we ſee, that he together with his fellow-ſufferers had both preſence of mind and time to diſcourſe.

Pſal. xxii. 16. Pſal. cv. 18.

[b] Rutilii innocentia ac virtus lateret, niſi accepiſſet injuriam; dum violatur, effulſit. *Sen. Ep.* 79.

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Even ſix long hours did he remain under ſuch tor- SERM.
ture, ſuſtaining in each moment of them beyond the III.
pangs of an ordinary death. But as the caſe was ſo
hard and ſad, ſo the reaſon of it was great, and the Mark xv. 25. 34.
fruit anſwerably good. Our Saviour did embrace ſuch a paſſion, that, in being thus content to endure the moſt intolerable ſmarts for us, he might demonſtrate the vehemence of his love; that he might ſignify the heinouſneſs of our ſins, which deſerved that from ſuch a perſon ſo heavy puniſhment ſhould be exacted; that he might appear to yield a valuable compenſation for thoſe pains which we ſhould have ſuffered; that he thoroughly might exemplify the hardeſt duties of obedience and patience.

III. This manner of ſuffering was (as moſt ſharp and afflictive, ſo) moſt vile and ſhameful; being proper to the baſeſt condition of the worſt men, and unworthy of a freeman, however nocent and guilty [c]. It was *ſervile ſupplicium*, a puniſhment never by the Romans, under whoſe law our Lord ſuffered, legally inflicted upon freemen, but upon ſlaves only; that is, upon people ſcarcely regarded as men, having in a ſort forfeited or loſt themſelves. And among the Jews that execution which moſt approached thereto, and in part agreed with it, (for their law did not allow any ſo inhuman puniſhment,) hanging up the dead bodies of ſome that had been put to death, was held moſt infamous and execrable: for, *Curſed*, ſaid the law, *is every one that hangeth upon a tree*; curſed, that is, devoted to reproach and malediction; *Accurſed by God*, ſaith the Hebrew, that is, ſeeming to be rejected by God, and by his ſpecial order expoſed to affliction. Deut. xxi. 23. Gal. iii. 13. Τοῦτο γὰρ μόνον τῆς τελευτῆς τὸ αἶσχος ὑπὸ ἁπάντων ἔκειτο. Chryſ. Tom. vi. Or. 61.

Indeed, according to the courſe of things, to be ſet on high, and for continuance of time to be objected to the view of all that paſs by, in that cala-

[c] Quod etiam homine libero, quamvis nocente, videatur indignum. *Lact.* iv. 26.

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SER M. III. mitous poſture, doth infuſe bad ſuſpicion, doth provoke cenſure, doth invite contempt and ſcorn, doth naturally draw forth language of deriſion, deſpite, and deteſtation; eſpecially from the inconſiderate, hard-hearted, and rude vulgar, which commonly doth think, ſpeak, and deal according to event and appearance: (—*Sequitur fortunam ſemper, et odit damnatos*—) whence Heb. x. 33. Θεατρίζεσθαι, *to be made a gazing-ſtock*, or an object of reproach to the multitude, is by the Apoſtle mentioned as an aggravation of the hardſhips endured by the primitive Chriſtians. And thus in extremity did it befal our Lord: for we read, that the people did in that condition mock, jeer, and revile him, drawing up their noſes, abuſing him by ſcurrilous geſtures, letting out their virulent and wanton tongues againſt him; ſo as to verify that prediction, *I am a reproach of men, and deſpiſed of the people: All they that ſee me laugh me to ſcorn; they ſhoot out the lip, they ſhake the head, ſaying, He truſted in the Lord, let him deliver him, ſeeing he delighted in him.*

ἐξεμυκτήριζον· ἐνέπαιζον· ἐβλασφήμουν. Luke xxiii. 35, 36. Matt. xxvii. 39. Pſal. xxii. 6, 7, 8.

The ſame perſons who formerly had admired his glorious works, who had been raviſhed with his excellent diſcourſes, who had followed and favoured him ſo earneſtly, who had bleſſed and magnified him, *(for he*, ſaith St. Luke, *taught in the ſynagogues, being glorified by all,)* even thoſe very perſons did then behold him with pitileſs contempt and deſpite. In correſpondence to that prophecy, *they look and ſtare upon me*, εἰστήκει ὁ λαὸς θεωρῶν, *the people ſtood gazing* on him, in a moſt ſcornful manner, venting contemptuous and ſpiteful reproaches; as we ſee reported in the Evangelical ſtory.

Matt. ix. 33. xxi. 9. xii. 23. Luke iv. 15. Pſal. xxii. 17. Luke xxiii. 35.

Heb. xii. 2. Thus did our bleſſed Saviour *endure the croſs, deſpiſing the ſhame. Deſpiſing the ſhame*, that is, not ſimply diſregarding it, or (with a ſtoical haughtineſs, with a cynical immodeſty, with a ſtupid careleſſneſs) ſlighting it as no evil; but not eſchewing it, or not rating it for ſo great an evil, that to decline it he would

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would neglect the proſecution of his great and glo- SERM.
rious deſigns. III.

There is innate to man an averſation and abhor- ——
rency from diſgraceful abuſe, no leſs ſtrong than are the like antipathies to pain: whence *cruel mockings* Heb. xi. *and ſcourgings* are coupled as ingredients of the ſore 36.
perſecutions ſuſtained by God's faithful martyrs. And generally men with more readineſs will embrace, with more contentedneſs will endure the cruelty of the latter, than of the former; pain not ſo ſmartly affecting the lower ſenſe, as being inſolently contemned doth grate upon the fancy, and wound even the mind itſelf. For, *the wounds* of infamy *do* Prov. xviii. (as the wiſe man telleth us) *go down into the innermoſt* 8. xii. 18. *parts of the belly*, reaching the very heart, and touching the ſoul to the quick.

We therefore need not doubt, but that our Saviour as a man, endowed with human paſſions, was ſenſible of this natural evil; and that ſuch indignities did add ſomewhat of loathſomeneſs to his cup of affliction; eſpecially conſidering, that his great charity diſpoſed him to grieve, obſerving men to act ſo indecently, ſo unworthily, ſo unjuſtly toward him: yet in conſideration of the glory that would thence accrue to God, of the benefit that would redound to us, of the *joy that was ſet before him*, when *he* Heb. xii. 2. *ſhould ſee of the travail of his ſoul, and be ſatisfied*, he Iſa. liii. 11. moſt willingly did accept, and moſt gladly did comport with it. He *became a curſe for us*, expoſed to Gal. iii. 13. malediction and reviling; he *endured the contradiction*, Heb. xii. 3. or obloquy, *of ſinful men*: he was *deſpiſed, rejected*, Iſa. liii. 3. *and diſeſteemed of men*: he in common apprehenſion was deſerted by God, according to that of the prophet, *We did eſteem him ſtricken, ſmitten of God, and* Iſa. liii. 4. *afflicted*; himſelf even ſeeming to concur in that opinion. So was he *made a curſe for us*, that *we*, as Gal. iii. 13. the Apoſtle teacheth, might *be redeemed from the curſe of the law*; that is, that we might be freed from the exemplary puniſhment due to our tranſgreſſions of

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SERM. III. the law, with the diſpleaſure of God appearing therein, and the diſgrace before the world attending it. He choſe thus to *make himſelf of no reputation*, vouchſafing to be dealt with as a wretched ſlave, and a wicked miſcreant, that we might be exempted, not only from the torment, but alſo from the ignominy which we had merited: that together with our life, our ſafety, our liberty, we might even recover that honour which we had forfeited and embezzled.

Phil. ii. 7.

But leſt any ſhould be tempted not ſufficiently to value theſe ſufferances of our Lord, as not ſo rare, but that other men have taſted the like; leſt any ſhould preſume to compare them with afflictions incident to other perſons, as Celſus did compare them with thoſe of Anaxarchus and Epictetus; it is requiſite to conſider ſome remarkable particulars about them.

Orig. c. Cel. vii. p. 368.

We may then conſider, that not only the infinite dignity of his perſon, and the perfect innocency of his life, did enhance the price of his ſufferings; but ſome endowments peculiar to him, and ſome circumſtances adhering to his deſign, did much augment their force.

He was not only, according to the frame and temper of human nature, ſenſibly touched with the pain, the ſhame, the whole combination of diſaſters apparently waiting on his paſſion; as God (when he did inſert ſenſe and paſſion into our nature, ordering objects to affect them,) did intend we ſhould be, and as other men in like circumſtances would have been; but in many reſpects beyond that ordinary rate: ſo that no man, we may ſuppoſe, could have felt ſuch grief from them as he did, no man ever hath been ſenſible of any thing comparable to what he did endure; that paſſage being truly applicable to him,

Lam. i. 12. *Behold and ſee, if there be any ſorrow like to my ſorrow, which is done unto me, wherewith the Lord hath afflicted me in the day of his fierce anger*; as that unparalleled

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paralleled *sweating out great lumps of blood* may argue; and as the terms expressing his resentments do intimate. For, in respect of present evils, he said of himself, *My soul is exceeding sorrowful to death*; he is said ἀδημονεῖν, *to be in great anguish* and anxiety, to be *in an agony* or pang of sorrow. In regard to mischiefs which he saw coming on, he is said to be *disturbed in spirit*, and to be *sore amazed*, or dismayed at them. To such an exceeding height did the sense of incumbent evils, and the prospect of impendent calamities, the apprehension of his case, together with a reflection on our condition, screw up his affections.

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Luke xxii. 44. Matt. xxvi. 37, 38. John xiii. 21. xii. 27. Mark xiv. 33.

And no wonder that such a burden, even the weight of all the sins (the numberless most heinous sins and abominations) that ever were committed by mankind, by appropriation of them to himself, lying on his shoulders, he should feel it heavy, or seem to crouch and groan under it; that in the mystical psalm, applied by the Apostle to him, he should cry out, *Innumerable evils have compassed me about, mine iniquities have taken hold upon me, so that I am not able to look up: They are more than the hairs of my head, and my heart faileth me.* The sight of God's indignation so dreadfully flaming out against sin, might well astonish and terrify him: to stand, as it were, before the mouth of hell belching fire and brimstone in his face; to lie down in the hottest furnace of divine vengeance; to quench with his own heart-blood the wrath of heaven, and the infernal fire, (as he did in regard to those who will not rekindle them to themselves,) might well in the heart of a man beget unconceivable and unexpressible pressures of affliction. When such a father (so infinitely good and kind to him, whom he so dearly and perfectly loved,) did hide his face from him, did frown on him, how could he otherwise than be mightily troubled? Is it strange that so hearty a love, so tender a pity, contemplating our sinfulness, and experi-

Heb. x. 5. Psal. xl. 12.

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SERM. III. menting our wretchedneſs, ſhould be deeply touched? To ſee, I ſay, ſo plainly, to feel ſo thoroughly the horrible blindneſs, the folly, the infidelity, the imbecillity, the ingratitude, the incorrigibility, the ſtrange perverſeneſs, perfidiouſneſs, malice, and cruelty of mankind in ſo many inſtances, (in the treaſon of Judas, in the denial of Peter, in the deſertion of all the Apoſtles, in the ſpite and rage of the perſecutors, in the falſehood of the witneſſes, in the abuſes of the people, in the compliance of Pilate, in a general conſpiracy of friends and foes to ſin,) all theſe ſurrounding him, all invading him, all diſcharging themſelves upon him; would it not aſtone a mind ſo pure? Would it not wound a heart ſo tender and full of charity?

Surely, any of thoſe perſons who fondly do pretend unto, or vainly do glory in, a ſullen apathy, or a ſtubborn contempt of the evils incident to our nature and ſtate, would in ſuch a caſe have been utterly dejected: the moſt reſolved philoſopher would have been daſhed into confuſion at the ſight, would have been cruſhed into deſperation under the ſenſe of thoſe evils which did aſſault him.

With the greatneſs of the cauſes, the goodneſs of his conſtitution did conſpire to increaſe his ſufferings. For ſurely, as his complexion was moſt pure and delicate, his ſpirit moſt vivid and apprehenſive, his affections moſt pliant and tractable; ſo accordingly would the impreſſions upon him be moſt ſenſible, and conſequently the pains which he felt (in body or ſoul) moſt afflictive.

That we in like caſes are not alike moved, that we do not tremble at the apprehenſions of God's diſpleaſure, that we are not affrighted with the ſenſe of our ſins, that we do not with ſad horror reſent our danger and our miſery, doth ariſe from that we have very glimmering and faint conceptions of thoſe matters; or that they do not in ſo clear and lively a manner ſtrike our fancy; (not appearing in their true

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true nature and proper ſhape, ſo heinous and ſo hi- SERM.
deous as they really are in themſelves and in their III.
conſequences;) or becauſe we have but weak per-
ſuaſions about them; or becauſe we do but ſlightly conſider them; or from that our hearts are very hard and callous, our affections very cold and dull, ſo that nothing of this nature (nothing beſide groſs material affairs) can mollify or melt them; or for that we have in us ſmall love to God, and a ſlender regard to our own welfare; in fine, for that in ſpiritual matters we are neither ſo wiſe, ſo ſober, ſo ſerious, nor ſo good or ingenuous, in any reaſonable meaſure, as we ſhould be. But our Saviour in all thoſe reſpects was otherwiſe diſpoſed. He moſt evidently diſcerned the wrath of God, the grievouſneſs of ſin, the wretchedneſs of man, moſt truly, moſt fully, moſt ſtrongly repreſented to his mind: he moſt firmly believed, yea moſt certainly knew, whatever God's law had declared about them: he did exactly conſider and weigh them: his heart was moſt ſoft and ſenſible, his affections were moſt quick and excitable by their due objects: he was full of dutiful love to God, and moſt ardently deſirous of our good, bearing a more than fraternal good-will towards us. Whence it is not ſo marvellous that as a man, as a tranſcendently wiſe and good man, he was ſo vehemently affected by thoſe occurrences, that his imagination was ſo troubled, and his paſſions ſo ſtirred by them; ſo that he thence did ſuffer in a manner and to a degree unconceivable; according to that ejaculation in the Greek liturgies, Διὰ τῶν ἀγνώστων σε παθημάτων ἐλέησον ἡμᾶς, Χριστὲ, *By thy unknown ſufferings, O Chriſt, have mercy on us.* But farther,

IV. We may conſider, that this way of ſuffering had in it ſome particular advantages, conducing to the accompliſhment of our Lord's principal deſigns.

Its being very notorious, and laſting a competent time, were good advantages. For if he had been privately

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privately made away, or ſuddenly diſpatched, no ſuch great notice would have been taken of it, nor would the matter of fact have been ſo fully proved, to the confirmation of our faith, and conviction of infidelity; nor had that his excellent deportment under ſuch bitter affliction (his moſt divine patience, meekneſs, and charity,) ſo illuſtriouſly ſhone forth. Wherefore to prevent all exceptions, and excuſes of unbelief, (together with other collateral good purpoſes) divine Providence did ſo manage the buſineſs, that as the courſe of his life, ſo alſo the manner of his death, ſhould be moſt conſpicuouſly remarkable.

John xviii. 20. Acts xxvi. 26. *I ſpake freely to the world, and in ſecret have I done nothing*, ſaid he of himſelf; and, *Theſe things* (ſaid St. Paul to king Agrippa) *were not done in a corner.* Such were the proceedings of his life, not cloſe or clandular, but frank and open, not preſently huſhed up, but leiſurely carried on in the face of the world, that men might have the advantage to obſerve and examine them. And as he lived, ſo he died, moſt publickly and viſibly; the world being witneſs of his death, and ſo prepared to believe his reſurrection, and thence diſpoſed to embrace his doctrine; according to what he did foretel, *I being lifted up from the earth, ſhall draw all men to me:* for he drew all men by ſo obvious a death to take notice of it, he drew all well-diſpoſed perſons from the wondrous conſequences of it to believe on him. And, *As*, ſaid he again, *Moſes did exalt the ſerpent in the wilderneſs, ſo muſt the Son of man be exalted.* As the elevation of that myſterious ſerpent did render it viſible, and did attract the eyes of people toward it; whereby, God's power inviſibly accompanying that ſacramental performance, they were cured of thoſe mortiferous ſtings which they had received: ſo our Lord, being mounted on the croſs, allured the eyes of men to behold him, and their hearts to cloſe with him; whereby, the heavenly virtue of God's Spirit co-operating, they became ſaved from thoſe deſtructive ſins, which

John xii. 32. (Iren. ii. 26.)

John iii. 14. Iren. iv. 5.

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which from the Devil's ſerpentine inſtigations they had incurred. SERM. III.

Another advantage of this kind of ſuffering was, that by it the nature of that kingdom, which he did intend to erect, was evidently ſignified: that it was not ſuch as the carnal people did expect, an external, earthly, temporal kingdom, conſiſting in domination over the bodies and eſtates of men, dignified by outward wealth and ſplendor, managed by worldly power and policy, promoted by forcible compulſion and terror of arms, affording the advantages of ſafety, quiet, and proſperity here; but a kingdom purely ſpiritual, celeſtial, eternal; conſiſting in the governance of men's hearts and minds; adorned with endowments of wiſdom and virtue; adminiſtered by the conduct and grace of God's holy Spirit; upheld and propagated by meek inſtruction, by virtuous example, by hearty devotion, and humble patience; rewarding its loyal ſubjects with ſpiritual joys and conſolations now, with heavenly reſt and bliſs hereafter. No other kingdom could he preſume to deſign, who ſubmitted to this dolorous and diſgraceful way of ſuffering; no other exploits could he pretend to atchieve by expiring on a croſs; no other way could he rule, who gave himſelf to be managed by the will of his adverſaries; no other benefits would this forlorn caſe allow him to diſpenſe. So that well might he then aſſert, *My kingdom is not of this world*; when he was going in this ſignal way to demonſtrate that important truth. John xviii. 36.

It was alſo a moſt convenient touchſtone to prove the genuine diſpoſition and worth of men; ſo as to diſcriminate thoſe wiſe, ſober, ingenuous, ſincere, generous ſouls, who could diſcern true goodneſs through ſo dark a cloud, who could love it though ſo ill-favouredly disfigured, who could embrace and avow it notwithſtanding ſo terrible diſadvantages; it ſerved, I ſay, to diſtinguiſh thoſe *bleſſed* ones, who Luke ii. 35.

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SERM. III. *would not be offended in him*, or by *the ſcandal of the croſs* be diſcouraged from adhering to him, from the crew of blind, vain, perverſe, haughty people, who, being ſcandalized at his adverſity, would contemn and reject him.

Matt. xi. 6. Gal. v. 11. 1 Pet. ii. 7, 8. 1 Cor. i. 23.

Another conſiderable advantage was this, that by it God's ſpecial providence was diſcovered, and his glory illuſtrated in the propagation of the Goſpel. For how could it be, that a perſon of ſo low parentage, of ſo mean garb, of ſo poor condition, who underwent ſo lamentable and deſpicable a kind of death, falling under the pride and ſpite of his enemies, ſo eaſily ſhould gain ſo general an opinion in the world (even among the beſt, the wiſeſt, the greateſt perſons,) of being *the Lord of life and glory?* How, I ſay, could it happen, that ſuch a miracle could be effected without God's aid and ſpecial concurrence? That king Herod, who from a long reign in flouriſhing ſtate, with proſperous ſucceſs in his enterpriſes, did attain the name of great; or that Veſpaſian, who triumphantly did aſcend the imperial throne, ſhould either of them, by a few admirers of worldly vanity, ſeriouſly be held, or in flattery be called the Meſſias, is not ſo ſtrange: but that one who was trampled on ſo miſerably, and treated as a wretched caitiff, ſhould inſtantly conquer innumerable hearts, and, from ſuch a depth of extreme adverſity, ſhould be advanced to the ſublimeſt pitch of glory; that *the ſtone which the builders* with ſo much ſcorn *did refuſe*, ſhould *become the head ſtone of the corner*; *this* (with good aſſurance we may ſay) *was the Lord's doing, and it is marvellous in our eyes.*

1 Cor. i. 20. Chryſ. tom. vi. Orat. 61. 1 Cor. ii. 8. Jam. ii. 1. Pſal. cxviii. 22, 23.

Hereby indeed *the excellency of divine power* and wiſdom was much glorified; by ſo impotent, ſo improbable, ſo implauſible means accompliſhing ſo great effects; ſubduing the world to obedience of God, not by the active valour of an illuſtrious hero, but through the patient ſubmiſſion of a poor, abuſed, and

2 Cor. iv. 7. 1 Cor. i. 27.

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and oppressed person; restoring mankind to life and happiness by the sorrowful death of a crucified Saviour. SERM. III.

V. Lastly, the consideration of our Lord's suffering in this manner is very useful in application to our practice: no point is more fruitful of wholesome instruction, none is more forcible to kindle devout affections, none can afford more efficacious inducements and incentives to a pious life. For what virtue will not a serious meditation on the cross be apt to breed and to cherish? To what duty will it not engage and excite us?

1. Are we not hence infinitely obliged with most humble affection and hearty gratitude to adore each person of the blessed Trinity?

That God the Father should design such a redemption for us; *not sparing his own Son*, (*the Son of his love*, dear to him as himself,) but *delivering him up for us*, to be thus dealt with for our sake: that God would endure to see his Son in so pitiful a condition, to hear him groaning under so grievous pressures, to let him be so horribly abused; and that for us, who deserved nothing from him, who had demerited so much against him; for us, who were no friends to him, (for *even when we were enemies, we were reconciled to God by the death of his Son*;) who were not any ways commendable for goodness or righteousness: (for *Christ did suffer for sinners, the just for the unjust*; and *God commended his love to us, that while we were sinful, Christ died for us*:) that God thus should *love us, sending his Son to be a propitiation for our sins*, in so dismal a way of suffering, how stupendous is that goodness! How vast an obligation doth it lay upon us to reciprocal affection! If we do owe all to God, as our maker, from whose undeserved bounty we did receive all that we have; how much farther do we stand indebted to him as the author of our redemption, from whose ill-deserved mercy we receive a new being, and better state; and that in a way

Rom. viii. 32. Col. i. 13. Rom. v. 10. 1 Pet. iii. 18. Rom. v. 6. 2 Cor. v. 19. Rom. v. 8. 1 John iv. 10.

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SERM. III. way far more obliging! For God created us with a word, without more coſt or trouble: but to redeem us, ſtood him in huge expences and pains; no leſs than the debaſing his only Son to our frailty, the expoſing him to more than our miſery, the withdrawing his face and reſtraining his bowels from his beſt beloved. If a Jew then were commanded by law, if a Gentile were obliged by nature, to *love God with all his heart and with all his ſoul*; what affection doth a Chriſtian, under the law and duty of grace, owe unto him? By what computation can we reckon that debt? What faculties have we ſufficient to diſcharge it? What finite heart can hold an affection commenſurate to ſuch an obligation?

And how can it otherwiſe than inflame our heart with love toward the bleſſed Son of God, our Saviour, to conſider that, merely out of charitable pity toward us, he purpoſely came down from heaven, and took our fleſh upon him, that he might therein undergo thoſe extreme acerbities of pain, and thoſe moſt ugly indignities of ſhame for us? *Greater love* (ſaid he) *hath no man than this, that a man lay down his life for his friends.* But that God ſhould lay down his life, ſhould pour forth his blood, ſhould be aſperſed with the worſt crimes, and clothed with fouleſt ſhame, ſhould be executed on a croſs as a malefactor and a ſlave, for his enemies and rebellious traitors, what imagination can deviſe any expreſſion of charity or friendſhip comparable to this? Wherefore if love naturally be productive of love, if friendſhip juſtly meriteth a correſpondence in good-will, what effect ſhould the conſideration of ſo ineffable a love, of ſo unparalleled friendſhip, have upon us?

Eph. iii. 19. v. 2. 25. Gal. ii. 20. Apoc. i. 5. John xv. 13. μείζονα ταύτης ἀγάπην οὐδεὶς ἔχει, ἵνα τις —

How can any ſerious reflection on this event fail to work hearty gratitude in us toward our good Lord? For put caſe any perſon for our ſake (that he might reſcue us from the greateſt miſchiefs, and purchaſe for us the higheſt benefits,) willingly ſhould deprive himſelf of all his eſtate, (and that a very large

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large one) of his honour, (and that a very high one) of his eaſe and pleaſure, (and thoſe the moſt perfect and aſſured that could be;) that he ſhould expoſe himſelf to the greateſt hazards, ſhould endure the ſoreſt pains, and moſt diſgraceful ignominies; ſhould proſtitute his life, and in moſt hideous manner loſe it, merely for our ſake: ſhould we not then apprehend and confeſs ourſelves monſtrouſly ingrateful, if we did not moſt deeply reſent ſuch kindneſs; if upon all occaſions we did not expreſs our thankfulneſs for it; if we did not ever readily yield all the acknowledgement and all the requital we were able? The caſe in regard to our bleſſed Saviour is like in kind; but in degree, whatever we can ſuppoſe doth infinitely fall below the performances of him for us, who ſtooped from the top of heaven, who laid aſide the majeſty and the felicity of God, for the infamies and the dolours of a croſs, that he might redeem us from the torments of hell, and inſtate us in the joys of paradiſe. So that our obligations of gratitude to him are unexpreſſibly great; and we cannot with any face deny ourſelves to be moſt baſely unworthy, if the effects in our heart and life be not anſwerable. SERM. III.

Nor ſhould we forget, that alſo upon this account we do owe great love and thanks to God the Holy Ghoſt, who, as he did originally conſpire in the wonderful project of our redemption, as he did executively by miraculous operation conduct our Saviour into his fleſhly tabernacle, as he did by unmeaſurable communications of divine virtue aſſiſt his humanity through all the courſe of his life; ſo in this juncture he did inſpire him with charity more than human, and did ſupport him to undergo thoſe preſſures with invincible patience; and ſo did ſanctify all this ſacerdotal performance, that our Lord, as the Apoſtle doth affirm, *did through the eternal Spirit offer himſelf without ſpot to God.* John iii. 34. Heb. ix. 14.

2. What ſurer ground can there be of faith in God,

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SERM. III. God, what ſtronger encouragement of hope, than is ſuggeſted by this conſideration? For if God ſtedfaſtly did hold his purpoſe, and faithfully did accomplish his word in an inſtance ſo diſtaſteful to his own heart and bowels; how can we ever ſuſpect his conſtancy and fidelity in any caſe? How can we diſtruſt the completion of any divine promiſe?

1 Pet. i. 20. Epheſ. i. 4. Luke i. 70.

Rom. viii. 32. *If God ſpared not his own Son, but delivered him up for us*, to the ſuffering of ſo contumelious affliction, how can we any ways be diffident of his bounty, or deſpair of his mercy? *how* (as the Apoſtle doth argue) *ſhall he not alſo with him freely give us all things?*

If ever we be tempted to doubt of God's goodneſs, will not this experiment thereof convince and ſatisfy us? For what higher kindneſs could God expreſs, what lower condeſcenſion could he vouchſafe, by what pledge could he more clearly or ſurely teſtify his willingneſs and his delight to do us good, than by thus ordering his deareſt Son to undergo ſuch miſeries for us?

Quis de ſe deſperet, pro quo tam humilis eſſe voluit Filius Dei? *Aug. de Ag. Chr. c.* 11.

If the greatneſs of our ſins diſcourageth us from entertaining comfortable hopes of mercy, will it not rear our hearts, to conſider that ſuch a puniſhment hath been inflicted to expiate them, which might content the moſt rigorous ſeverity; that ſuch a price is laid down to *redeem us from the curſe*, which richly may ſuffice to diſcharge it; that ſuch a ſacrifice hath been offered, which God hath avowed for moſt available, and acceptable to himſelf? So that now what can juſtice exact more from us? What have we farther to do, than with a penitent and thankful heart to embrace the mercy purchaſed for us? *Who is he that condemneth*, ſeeing *Chriſt hath died*, and *hath his own ſelf borne our ſins in his own body on the tree?* Whatever the wounds of our conſcience be, is not *the blood of the croſs*, tempered with our hearty repentance, and applied by a lively faith, a ſovereign balſam, of virtue ſufficient to cure them? And may we not *by his ſtripes be healed*? Have we not abundant

Gal. iii. 13. Epheſ. v. 2. 1 Pet. i. 19. Rom. viii. 34. 1 Pet. ii. 24. 1 Pet. ii. 24.

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dant reaſon, with the holy Apoſtle, to *joy in God through our Lord Jeſus Chriſt; by whom we have received the atonement?* Is it not to depreciate the worth, to diſparage the efficacy of our Lord's paſſion, any ways to deſpair of mercy, or to be diſconſolate for guilt; as if the croſs were not enough worthy to compenſate for our unworthineſs, or our Saviour's patience could not balance our diſobedience? SERM. III. Rom. v. 11.

3. It indeed may yield great joy and ſprightly conſolation to us, to contemplate our Lord upon the croſs, exerciſing his immenſe charity toward us, tranſacting all the work of our redemption, defeating all the enemies and evacuating all the obſtacles of our ſalvation.

May we not delectably conſider him as there ſtretching forth his arms of kindneſs, with them to embrace the world, and to receive all mankind under the wings of his protection? as there ſpreading out his hands, with them earneſtly inviting and intreating us to accept the overtures of grace, procured by him for us? Extendit in paſſione manus ſuas, &c. *Lact.* iv. 26. Iſa. lxv. 2.

Is it not ſweet and ſatisfactory, to view our great High Prieſt on that high altar offering up his own pure fleſh, and pouring out his precious blood, as an univerſal complete ſacrifice, propitiatory for the ſins of mankind? Lev. ix. 22. Chryſ. Tom. Or. 82. Pope Leo i.

Is it not a goodly object to behold humility and patience ſo glorioufly rearing themſelves above all worldly, all infernal pride and inſolence; by the croſs aſcending unto the celeſtial throne of dignity and majeſty ſuperlative?

Is it not pleaſant to contemplate our Lord there ſtanding erect, not only as a reſolute ſufferer, but as a noble conqueror, where *having ſpoiled principalities and powers, he made a ſolemn ſhew triumphing over them?* Did ever any conqueror, loftily ſeated in his triumphal chariot, yield a ſpectacle ſo gallant and magnificent? Was ever tree adorned with trophies ſo pompous and ſplendid? Col. ii. 15.

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To the exterior view and carnal ſenſe of men, our Lord was then indeed expoſed to ſcorn and ſhame; but to ſpiritual and ſincere diſcerning, all his and our enemies did there hang up as objects of contempt, utterly overthrown and undone.

ὁ ἰσχυρὸς. Matt. xii. 29. Luke xi. 21, 22. Heb. ii. 14.

There the Devil, that *ſtrong* and ſturdy *one*, did hang up bound in chains, diſarmed and rifled, quite baffled and confounded, mankind being reſcued from his tyrannick power.

Gal. vi. 14.

There the world, with its vain pomps, its counterfeit beauties, its bewitching pleaſures, its fondly admired excellencies, did hang up all defaced and diſparaged; as it appeared to St. Paul: for, *God* (ſaith he) *forbid that I ſhould glory, ſave in the croſs of Chriſt, by which the world is crucified to me, and I unto the world.*

Gal. ii. 20. v. 24. Col. iii. 5. Rom. viii. 13.

There, in a moſt lively repreſentation, and moſt admirable pattern, was exhibited *the mortification of our fleſh, with its affections and luſts*; and our *old man was crucified, that the body of ſin might be deſtroyed.*

1 Pet. ii. 24.

There our ſins, being (as St. Peter telleth us) *carried up by him unto the gibbet*, did hang as marks

Rom. viii. 3.

of his victorious proweſs, as malefactors by him *condemned in the fleſh*, as objects of our horror and hatred.

1 Cor. xv. 54, 55. 2 Tim. i. 10. Heb. ii. 14.

There death itſelf hung gaſping, with its ſting pulled out, and all its terrors quelled; his death having prevented ours, and induced immortality.

Eph. ii. 15, 16. Col. i. 20.

There all wrath, *enmity*, ſtrife, (the banes of comfortable life) did hang *aboliſhed in his fleſh*, and *ſlain upon the croſs, by the blood whereof he made peace, and reconciled all things in heaven and earth.*

Col. ii. 14.

There manifold yokes of bondage, inſtruments of vexation, and principles of variance, even all *the hand-writing of ordinances that was againſt us*, did hang up *cancelled* and *nailed to the croſs.*

So much ſweet comfort by ſpecial conſideration may be extracted from this event, which in appearance was moſt doleful, but in effect the moſt happy that

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that ever by providence was diſpenſed to the world. Farther,

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4. This conſideration is moſt uſeful to render us very humble and ſenſible of our weakneſs, our vileneſs, our wretchedneſs. For how low was that our fall, from which we could not be raiſed without ſuch a depreſſion of God's only Son? How great is that impotency, which did need ſuch a ſuccour to relieve it? How abominable muſt be that iniquity, which might not be expiated without ſo coſtly a ſacrifice? How deplorable is that miſery, which could not be removed without commutation of ſo ſtrange a ſuffering? Would the Son of God have ſo *emptied* and abaſed himſelf for nothing? Would he have endured ſuch pains and ignominies for a trifle? No ſurely; if our guilt had been ſlight, if our caſe had been tolerable, the divine wiſdom would have choſen a more cheap and eaſy remedy for us.

Ἑαυτὸν ἐκένωσε. Phil. ii. 7.

Is it not madneſs for us to be conceited of any worth in ourſelves, to confide in any merit of our works, to glory in any thing belonging to us, to fancy ourſelves brave, fine, happy perſons, worthy of great reſpect and eſteem; when as our unworthineſs, our demerit, our forlorn eſtate did extort from the moſt gracious God a diſpleaſure needing ſuch a reconciliation, did impoſe upon the moſt glorious Son of God a neceſſity to undergo ſuch a puniſhment in our behalf?

How can we reaſonably pretend to any honour, or juſtly aſſume any regard to ourſelves, when as the firſt-born of heaven, *the Lord of glory*, partaker of divine majeſty, was fain to *make himſelf of no reputation*, to put himſelf into *the garb of a ſervant*, and under the imputation of a malefactor, to bear ſuch diſgrace and infamy in our room, in lieu of the confuſion due to us?

1 Cor. ii. 8. Phil. ii. 7.

What more palpable confutation can there be of human vanity and arrogance, of all lofty *imaginations*, all preſumptuous confidences, all turgid humours,

2 Cor. x. 5.

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SERM. III. mours, all fond ſelf-pleaſings and ſelf-admirings, than is that tragical croſs, wherein, as in a glaſs, our foul deformity, our pitiful meanneſs, our helpleſs infirmity, our ſad woefulneſs are ſo plainly repreſented?

Well ſurely may we ſay with St. Auſtin, *Let man now at length bluſh to be proud, for whom God is made ſo humble.* [And ſince (as de doth add) *this great diſeaſe of ſoul did bring down the Almighty Phyſician from heaven, did humble him to the form of a ſervant, did ſubject him to contumelies, did ſuſpend him on a croſs, that this tumour by virtue of ſo great a medicine might be cured*;] may not he well be preſumed incurable, who is not cured of his pride by this medicine; in whom neither the reaſon of the caſe, nor the force of ſuch an example can work humility [d]?

5. But farther, while this contemplation doth breed ſober humility, it alſo ſhould preſerve us from baſe abjectneſs of mind; for it doth evidently demonſtrate, that, according to God's infallible judgment, we are very conſiderable; that our ſouls are capable of high regard; that it is a great pity we ſhould be loſt and abandoned to ruin. For ſurely, had not God much eſteemed and reſpected us, he would not for our ſakes have ſo debaſed himſelf, or deigned to endure ſo much for our recovery; divine juſtice would not have exacted or accepted ſuch a ranſom for our ſouls, had they been of little worth. We ſhould not therefore ſlight ourſelves, nor demean ourſelves like ſorry contemptible wretches, as if we deſerved nò conſideration, no pity from ourſelves; as if we thought our ſouls not worth ſaving, which yet our Lord thought good to purchaſe at ſo dear

Acts xiii. 46.

[d] Jam tandem erubeſcat homo eſſe ſuperbus, propter quem factus eſt humilis Deus. *Aug. in Pſ.* xviii.

Iſte ingens morbus omnipotentem medicum de cœlo deduxit, uſque ad formam ſervi humiliavit, contumeliis egit, ligno ſuſpendit, ut per ſalutem tantæ medicinæ curetur hic tumor. *Ibid.*

Quæ ſuperbia ſanari poteſt, ſi humilitate Filii Dei non ſanatur? *Aug. de Agone Chr.* cap. xi.

a rate.

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a rate [e]. By ſo deſpiſing or diſregarding ourſelves, do we not condemn the ſentiments, do we not vilify the ſufferings of our Lord; ſo with a pitiful meanneſs of ſpirit joining the moſt unworthy injuſtice and ingratitude? Again, SERM. III.

6. How can we reflect upon this event without extreme diſpleaſure againſt and hearty deteſtation of our ſins? thoſe ſins which indeed did bring ſuch tortures and ſuch diſgraces upon our bleſſed Redeemer? Judas, the wretch who betrayed him; the Jewiſh prieſts who did accuſe and proſecute him; the wicked rout which did abuſively inſult over him; thoſe cruel hands that ſmote him; thoſe pitileſs hearts that ſcorned him; thoſe poiſonous tongues that mocked him and reviled him; all thoſe who were the inſtruments and abettors of his affliction, how do we loath and abhor them! How do we deteſt their names, and execrate their memories! But how much greater reaſon have we to abominate our ſins, which were the true, the principal actors of all that woeful tragedy! *He was delivered for our offences:* they were indeed the traitors, which by the hands of Judas delivered him up. *He that knew no ſin, was made ſin for us*, that is, was accuſed, was condemned, was executed as a ſinner for us. It was therefore we, who by our ſins did impeach him; the ſpiteful prieſts were but our advocates: we by them did adjudge and ſentence him; Pilate was but drawn in againſt his will and conſcience, to be our ſpokeſman in that behalf: we by them did inflict that horrid puniſhment on him; the Roman executioners were but our repreſentatives therein. *He became a curſe for us*; that is, all the mockery, deriſion, and contumely he endured, did proceed from us; the ſilly

Rom. iv. 25. 2 Cor. v. 21. Gal. iii. 13.

[e] Aut vero pro minimo habet Deus hominem, propter quem mori voluit Filium ſuum? *Aug. in Pſal.* cxlviii.

Si vobis ex terrena fragilitate viles eſtis, ex pretio veſtro vos eſtimate. *Aug.*

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SERM. III. people were but properties acting our parts. Our ſins were they that cried out, *Crucifige, (Crucify him, crucify him,)* with clamours more loud and more importunate than did all the Jewiſh rabble: it was they, which by the borrowed throats of that baſe people did ſo outrageouſly perſecute him. *He was wounded for our tranſgreſſions, and bruiſed for our iniquities:* it was they, which by the hands of the fierce ſoldiers, and of the rude populace, as by ſenſeleſs engines, did buffet and ſcourge him; they by the nails and thorns did pierce his fleſh, and rend his ſacred body. Upon them therefore it is moſt juſt and fit that we ſhould turn our hatred, that we ſhould diſcharge our indignation.

Iſa. liii. 5.

7. And what in reaſon can be more powerful toward working penitential ſorrow and remorſe, than reflection upon ſuch horrible effects, proceeding from our ſins? How can we forbear earneſtly to grieve, conſidering ourſelves by them to have been the perfidious betrayers, the unjuſt ſlanderers, the cruel perſecutors and barbarous murderers of a perſon ſo innocent and lovely, ſo good and benign, ſo great and glorious; of God's own dear Son, of our beſt friend, of our moſt gracious Redeemer?

8. If ingenuity will not operate ſo far, and hereby melt us into contrition; yet ſurely this conſideration muſt needs affect us with a religious fear. For can we otherwiſe than tremble to think upon the heinous guilt of our ſins, upon the dreadful fierceneſs of God's wrath againſt them, upon the impartial ſeverity of divine judgment for them, all ſo manifeſtly diſcovered, all ſo lively ſet forth in this diſmal ſpectacle? If the view of an ordinary execution is apt to beget in us ſome terror, ſome dread of the law, ſome reverence toward authority; what awful impreſſions ſhould this ſingular example of divine juſtice work upon us?

Pſal. cxix. 120.

How greatly we ſhould be moved thereby, what affections it ſhould raiſe in us, we may even learn from

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from the moſt inanimate creatures: for the whole world did ſeem affected thereat with horror and confuſion; the frame of things was diſcompoſed and diſturbed; all nature did feel a kind of compaſſion and compunction for it. The ſun (as from averſion and ſhame) did hide his face, leaving the world covered for three hours with mournful blackneſs; the bowels of the earth did yearn and quake; the rocks did ſplit; the veil of the temple was rent; the graves did open themſelves, and the dead bodies were rouſed up. And, can we then (who are moſt concerned in the event) be more ſtupid than the earth, more obdurate than rocks, more drowſy than interred carcaſes, the moſt inſenſible and immoveable things in nature? But farther,

9. How can the meditation on this event do otherwiſe than hugely deter us from all wilful diſobedience and commiſſion of ſin? For how thereby can we violate ſuch engagements, and thwart ſuch an example of obedience? How thereby can we abuſe ſo wonderful goodneſs, and diſoblige ſo tranſcendent charity? How thereby can we reject that gentle dominion over us, which our Redeemer did ſo dearly purchaſe, or renounce *the Lord that bought us* at ſo high a rate? With what heart can we bring upon the ſtage, and act over that direful tragedy, renewing all that pain and all that diſgrace to our Saviour; as the Apoſtle teacheth that we do by apoſtaſy, *crucifying to ourſelves the Son of God afreſh, and putting him to an open ſhame?* Can we without horror *tread under foot the Son of God, and count the blood of the covenant an unholy thing*; (as the ſame divine Apoſtle ſaith all wilful tranſgreſſors do;) vilifying that moſt ſacred and precious blood, ſo freely ſhed for the demonſtration of God's mercy, and ratification of his gracious intentions towards us, as a thing of no ſpecial worth or conſideration; deſpiſing all his ſo kind and painful endeavours for our ſalvation; defeating his moſt charitable purpoſes,

Tit. ii. 14. 1 Pet. i. 18, 19. Rom. xiv. 9. 2 Cor. v. 15. 2 Pet. ii. 1. 1 Cor. vi. 20. Heb. vi. 6. ἀναςαυροῦντας. Heb. x. 29. ἐκουσίως ἁμαρτανόντων ἡμῶν, v. 26. καὶ τὸ ἁγιασθὲν μιανθέν.

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SERM. III. and earneſt deſires for our welfare; rendering all his ſo bitter and loathſome ſufferings in regard to us utterly vain and fruitleſs, yea indeed very hurtful and pernicious? For if the croſs do not ſave us from our ſins, it will much aggravate their guilt, and augment their puniſhment; bringing a ſeverer condemnation and a ſadder ruin on us. Again,

10. This conſideration affordeth very ſtrong engagements to the practice of charity towards our neighbour. For what heart can be ſo hard, that the blood of the croſs cannot mollify into a charitable and compaſſionate ſenſe? Can we forbear to love thoſe, toward whom our Saviour did bear ſo tender affection, for whom he was pleaſed to ſuſtain ſo woeful tortures and indignities? Shall we not, in obedience to his moſt urgent commands, in conformity to his moſt notable example, in grateful return to him for his benefits, who thus did gladly ſuffer for us, diſcharge this moſt ſweet and eaſy duty towards his beloved friends? Shall we not be willing, by parting with a little ſuperfluous ſtuff for the relief of our poor brother, to requite and gratify him, who, to ſuccour us in our diſtreſs, moſt bountifully did part with his wealth, with his glory, with his pleaſure, with his life itſelf? Shall we not meekly comport with an infirmity, not bear a petty neglect, not forgive a ſmall injury to our brother, when as our Lord did for us and from us bear a croſs, to procure remiſſion for our innumerable moſt heinous affronts and offences againſt Almighty God? Can a heart void of mercy and pity, with any reaſon or modeſty pretend to the mercies and compaſſions of the croſs? Can we hope, that God for Chriſt's ſake will pardon us, if we for Chriſt's ſake will not forgive our neighbour?

2 Cor. viii. 9. Eph. iv. 32. Col. iii. 13.

Joh. xv. 12. John xiii. 35. Can we hear our Lord ſaying to us, *This is my command, that ye love one another, as I have loved you*; and, *Hereby ſhall all men know that ye are my diſciples, if ye love one another?* Can we hear St. Paul exhorting,

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horting, *Walk in love, as Chriſt alſo hath loved us, and hath given himſelf for us, an offering and a ſacrifice to God for a ſweet ſmelling ſavour*; and, *We that are ſtrong ought to bear the infirmities of the weak—For even Chriſt pleaſed not himſelf, but, as it is written, The reproaches of them that reproached thee, fell on me?* Can we attend to St. John's arguing, *Beloved, if God ſo loved us, then ought we alſo to love one another. Hereby we perceive the love of God, becauſe he laid down his life for us: Wherefore we ought to lay down our lives for the brethren?*

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Eph. v. 2. Rom. xv. 1, 3. 1 Joh. iv. 11. iii. 16.

Can we, I ſay, conſider ſuch precepts, and ſuch diſcourſes, without effectually being diſpoſed to comply with them for the ſake of our crucified Saviour? all whoſe life was nothing elſe but one continual recommendation and enforcement of this duty; but his death eſpecially was a pattern moſt obliging, moſt incentive thereto. This uſe of the point is the more to be regarded, becauſe the Apoſtle doth apply it hereto, our text coming in upon that occaſion; for having pathetically exhorted the Philippians to all kinds of charity and humble condeſcenſion, he ſubjoineth, *Let this mind be in you, which was in Chriſt Jeſus; who being in the form of God, &c.* Phil. ii. 5, 6.

11. But furthermore, what can be more operative than this point toward breeding a diſregard of this world with all its deceitful vanities and miſchievous delights; toward reconciling our minds to the worſt condition into which it can bring us; toward ſupporting our hearts under the heavieſt preſſures of affliction which it can lay upon us? For can we reaſonably expect, can we eagerly affect, can we ardently deſire great proſperity, when as the Son of God, our Lord and Maſter, did only taſte ſuch adverſity? How can we refuſe, in ſubmiſſion to God's pleaſure, contentedly to bear a ſlight grievance, when as our Saviour gladly did bear a croſs, infinitely more diſtaſteful to carnal will and ſenſe than any that can befal us? Who now can

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SERM. III. can admire thoſe ſplendid trifles, which our Lord never did regard in his life, and which at his death only did ſerve to mock and abuſe him? Who can reliſh thoſe ſordid pleaſures, of which he living did not vouchſafe to taſte, and the contraries whereof he dying choſe to feel in all extremity? Who can diſdain or deſpiſe a ſtate of ſorrow and diſgrace, which he, by voluntary ſuſception of it, hath ſo dignified and graced; by which we ſo near reſemble and become conformable to him, by which we concur and partake with him; yea, by which in ſome caſes we may promote, and after a ſort complete his deſigns, *filling up* (as St. Paul ſpeaketh) *that which is behind of the afflictions of Chriſt in our fleſh?*

Rom. viii. 17. Phil. iii. 10. Apoc. i. 9. 1 Pet. iv. 13. Col. i. 24.

Who now can hugely prefer being eſteemed, approved, favoured, commended by men, before infamy, reproach, deriſion, and perſecution from them; eſpecially when theſe do follow conſcientious adherence to righteouſneſs? Who can be very ambitious of worldly honour and repute, covetous of wealth, or greedy of pleaſure, who doth obſerve the Son of God chooſing rather to hang upon a croſs, than to ſit upon a throne; inviting the clamours of ſcorn and ſpite, rather than acclamations of bleſſing and praiſe; diveſting himſelf of all ſecular power, pomp, plenty, conveniencies, and ſolaces; embracing the garb of a ſlave, and the repute of a malefactor, before the dignity and reſpect of a prince, which were his due, which he moſt eaſily could have obtained [f]?

Can we imagine it a very happy thing, to be high and proſperous in this world, to ſwim in affluence and pleaſure? Can we take it for a miſery, to be mean and low, to conflict with ſome wants and ſtraights here; ſeeing the Fountain of all happineſs did himſelf purpoſely condeſcend to ſo forlorn a ſtate, and was

[f] Cogitemus crucem ejus, et divitias lutum eſſe putabimus. *Hier. ad Nepot. Epiſt.* 2.

pleaſed

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pleased to become so deep a sufferer[s]? If with devout eyes of our mind we do behold our Lord hanging naked upon a gibbet, besmeared all over with streams of his own blood, groaning under smart anguish of pain, encompassed with all sorts of disgraceful abuses, *yielding* (as it was foretold of him) *his back to the smiters, and his cheeks to them who plucked off the hair, hiding not his face from shame and spitting*; will not the imagination of such a spectacle dim the lustre of all earthly grandeurs and beauties, damp the sense of all carnal delights and satisfactions, quash all that extravagant glee which we can find in any wild frolicks, or riotous merriments? Will it not stain all our pride, and check our wantonness? Will it not dispose our minds to be sober, placing our happiness in things of another nature, seeking our content in matters of higher importance; preferring obedience to the will of God before compliance with the fancies and desires of men; according to that precept of St. Peter, *Forasmuch then as Christ hath suffered for us in the flesh, arm yourselves likewise with the same mind—so as no longer to live the remaining time in the flesh, to the lusts of men, but to the will of God?*

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Isa. l. 6.

1 Pet. iv. 1, 2. Græc.

12. This indeed will instruct and incline us cheerfully to submit unto God's will, and gladly to accept from his hand whatever he disposeth, however grievous and afflictive to our natural will; this point suggesting great commendation of afflictions, and strong consolation under them. For if such hardship was to our Lord himself a school of duty, *he* (as the Apostle saith) *learning obedience from what he suffered*; if it was to him a fit mean of perfection, as the Apostle doth again imply when he saith, *that it became God to perfect the Captain of our salvation by suffering*; if it was an attractive of the divine favour even to him, as those words import, *Therefore the Father loveth*

ἔμαθεν ἀφ' ὧν ἔπαθε, Heb. v. 8.

Heb. ii. 10.

Joh. x. 17.

[s] Quis beatam vitam esse arbitretur in iis, quæ contemnenda esse docuit Filius Dei? *Aug. de Ag. Chr.* cap. xi.

me,

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SERM. III.

me, becauſe I lay down my life; if it was to him a ſtep toward glory, according to that ſaying, *Was not Chriſt to ſuffer, and ſo to enter into his glory?* yea, if it was a ground of conferring on him a ſublime pitch of dignity above all creatures, *God for this obedience having exalted him, and given him a name above all names; We ſeeing Jeſus—for the ſuffering of death, crowned with glory and honour*; the heavenly ſociety in the Revelations with one voice crying out, *Worthy is the Lamb that was ſlain, (who redeemed us to God by his blood) to receive power, and riches, and wiſdom, and ſtrength, and honour, and glory, and bleſſing:* If affliction did miniſter ſuch advantages to him; and if by our conformity to him in undergoing it, (with like equanimity, humility, and patience,) it may afford the like to us; what reaſon is there that we ſhould any-wiſe be diſcompoſed at it, or diſconſolate under it? Much greater reaſon, ſurely, there is, that, with St. Paul, and all the holy Apoſtles, we ſhould *rejoice, boaſt, and exult in our tribulations: far more cauſe we have, with them, to eſteem it a favour, a privilege, an ornament, a felicity to us, than to be diſpleaſed and diſcontented therewith.

Luke xxiv. 26. Phil. ii. 9. Heb. ii. 9. Rev. v. 12. * (Rom. v. 3. Col. i. 24. Matt. v. 12. Luke vi. 23. Phil. i. 29. Acts v. 41. Jam. i. 2. Heb. x. 34. 1 Pet. i. 7. Heb. xii. 2. 1 Cor. i. 4.) 1 Theſſ. iii. 3. Rom. viii. 29. Acts xiv. 22. 2 Tim. iii. 12. † Matt. x. 38. xvi. 24. Luke xiv. 27. ix. 23. Greg. Naz. Orat. 38. p. 623.

To do thus is a duty incumbent on us as Chriſtians. For, †*He*, ſaith our Maſter, *that doth not take up his croſs, and follow me, is not worthy of me: He that doth not carry his croſs, and go after me, cannot be my diſciple.* He that doth not willingly take the croſs, when it is preſented to him by God's hand; he that doth not contentedly bear it, when it is by providence impoſed on him, is nowiſe worthy of the honour to wait on Chriſt; he is not capable to be reckoned among the diſciples of our heavenly Maſter. He is *not worthy of Chriſt*, as not having the courage, the conſtancy, the ſincerity of a Chriſtian; or of one pretending to ſuch great benefits, ſuch high privileges, ſuch excellent rewards, as Chriſt our Lord and Saviour doth propoſe. He *cannot be Chriſt's diſciple*, ſhewing ſuch an incapacity to learn thoſe needful

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needful lessons of humility and patience, dictated by him; declaring such an indisposition to transcribe those copies of submission to the divine will, self-denial, and self-resignation, so fairly set him by the instruction and example of Christ: for, *Christ*, saith St. Peter, *suffered for us, leaving us an example, that we should follow his steps.* SERM. III. ὑπογραμμὸν ὑπολιμπάνων. 1 Pet. ii. 21.

13. The willing susception and the cheerful sustenance of the cross, is indeed the express condition, and the peculiar character of our Christianity; in signification whereof, it hath been from most ancient times a constant usage to mark those who enter into it with the figure of it. The cross, as the instrument by which our peace with God was wrought, as the stage whereon our Lord did act the last part of his marvellous obedience, consummating our redemption, as the field wherein the Captain of our salvation did achieve his noble victories, and erect his glorious trophies over all the enemies thereof, was well assumed to be the badge of our profession, the ensign of our spiritual warfare, the pledge of our constant adherence to our crucified Saviour; in relation to whom our chief hope is grounded, our great joy and sole glory doth consist: for, *God forbid*, saith St. Paul, *that I should glory, save in the cross of Christ.* τὸ τρόπαιον τῦ σαυρῦ. Const. Apost. viii. 12. Gal. vi. 14.

14. Let it be *to the Jews a scandal*, (or offensive to their fancy, prepossessed with expectations of a Messias flourishing in secular pomp and prosperity;) let it be *folly to the Greeks*, (or seem absurd to men puffed up and corrupted in mind with fleshly notions and maxims of worldly craft, disposing them to value nothing which is not grateful to present sense or fancy,) that God should put his own most beloved Son into so very sad and despicable a condition; that salvation from death and misery should be procured by so miserable a death; that eternal joy, glory, and happiness, should issue from these fountains of sorrow and shame; that a person in external 1 Cor. i. 23. Orig. in Cels. ii. p. 79.

semblance

SERM. III. ſemblance devoted to ſo opprobrious uſage, ſhould be the Lord and Redeemer of mankind, the King and Judge of all the world: let, I ſay, this doctrine be ſcandalous and diſtaſteful to ſome perſons tainted with prejudice; let it be ſtrange and incredible to others blinded with ſelf-conceit; let all the inconſiderate, all the proud, all the profane part of mankind openly with their mouth, or cloſely in heart, ſlight and reject it: yet to us it muſt appear grateful and joyous; to us it is πιςὸς λόγος, *a faithful* and moſt credible *propoſition worthy of all acceptation, that Jeſus Chriſt came into the world to ſave ſinners*, in this way of ſuffering for them: to us, who diſcern by a clearer light, and are endowed with a purer ſenſe, kindled by the divine Spirit; from whence we may with comfortable ſatisfaction of mind apprehend and taſte, that God could not in a higher meaſure, or fitter manner, illuſtrate his glorious attributes of goodneſs and juſtice, his infinite grace and mercy toward his poor creatures, his holy diſpleaſure againſt wickedneſs, his impartial ſeverity in puniſhing iniquity and impiety, or in vindicating his own ſacred honour and authority, than by thus ordering his only Son, clothed with our nature, to ſuffer for us; that alſo true virtue and goodneſs could not otherwiſe be taught, be exemplified, be commended and impreſſed with greater advantage.

1 Tim. i. 15. 2 Tim. ii. 11.

Since thereby indeed a charity and humanity ſo unparalleled, (far tranſcending theirs who have been celebrated for devoting their lives out of love to their country, or kindneſs to their friends,) a meekneſs ſo incomparable, a reſolution ſo invincible, a patience ſo heroical, were manifeſted for the inſtruction and direction of men; ſince never were the vices and the vanities of the world (ſo prejudicial to the welfare of mankind) ſo remarkably diſcountenanced; ſince never any ſuffering could pretend to ſo worthy and beneficial effects, the expiation of the whole world's ſins, and reconciliation of mankind to God,

1 John ii. 2. 2 Cor. v. 19.

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God, the which no other performance, no other ſa- SERM.
crifice did ever aim to procure; ſince, in fine, no III.
virtue had ever ſo glorious rewards, as ſovereign dig-
nity to him that exerciſed it, and eternal happineſs
to thoſe that imitate it; ſince, I ſay, there be ſuch
excellent uſes and fruits of the croſs borne by our
Saviour; we can have no reaſon to be offended at
it, or aſhamed of it; but with all reaſon heartily
ſhould approve and humbly adore the deep wiſdom
of God, together with all other his glorious attri-
butes diſplayed therein. To whom therefore, as is
moſt due, let us devoutly render all glory and praiſe.
And,

Unto him that loved us, and waſhed us from our ſins in his blood, and hath made us Kings and Prieſts unto God, and his Father; to him be glory and dominion for ever and ever. Apoc. i. 5, 6.

Bleſſing, and honour, and glory, and power, be unto him that ſitteth upon the throne, and unto the Lamb for ever and ever. Amen. Apoc. v. 13.

SERMON

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SERMON IV.

Of doing all in the Name of Chriſt.

COLOSS. iii. 17.

And whatſoever ye do in word, or in deed, do all in the name of the Lord Jeſus.

WHATSOEVER ye do in word, or deed: A duty we ſee the Apoſtle enjoins us of a large extent, and therefore ſurely of a great importance; indeed of an univerſal concernment; ſuch as muſt go along with, muſt run through, all our words and all our actions. We are therefore much obliged, and much concerned to attend thereto, and to practiſe it carefully. But firſt we muſt underſtand what it is; the doing whereof depends upon underſtanding the ſenſe of that phraſe *(doing in the name of Jeſus)* being ſomewhat ambiguous, and capable of divers meanings; which both in common uſe and in holy Scripture we find it to bear, different according to the variety of matters or occaſions to which it is applied; moſt of which are comprehended, and, as it were, complicated in that general one, according to which we may be ſaid to do that in another perſon's name, which we do with any kind of reference or regard to him; ſuch as our relations or our obligations to that perſon do require, and the particular

SERM. IV.

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SERM. IV. nature of the action doth admit. And according to this acceptation I conceive it ſafeſt and beſt to interpret Saint Paul's meaning here, ſuppoſing it to comprehend all the more ſpecial and reſtrained meanings of this phraſe, truly applicable to the preſent matter; of which meanings I ſhall endeavour in order to propound the chief; and together, both to unfold and to inculcate the ſeveral reſpective branches of this duty. Yet firſt of all rejecting one or two, which cannot well be applied to this purpoſe.

To do in another's name, doth ſometime denote the aſſuming another's perſon, or pretending to be the ſame with him, the very He. So, *many ſhall come in my name*, (propheſied our Saviour) *ſaying, I am Chriſt:* to do thus in Jeſus's name is the part of an Antichriſt, and an impoſtor. That ſenſe therefore hath nothing to do here.

Matt. xxiv. 5.

Again; to do in another's name, doth often imply doing *alterius loco*, or *vice*; in another's name, or ſtead, as a deputy, or ſubſtitute; repreſenting the perſon, or ſupplying the office of another. So did the Prophets *come, and ſpeak in God's name*; what they declared, or enjoined, being therefore ſaid to be declared and enjoined by God himſelf: *I ſpeak unto you, riſing up early, and ſpeaking*, (viz. by the Prophets, whom he ſent, and who are ſaid to come and ſpeak in his name.) And thus the Apoſtles ſpake in Chriſt's name: *We are ambaſſadors for Chriſt; we pray you in Chriſt's ſtead, be reconciled.* Thus alſo princes govern, and magiſtrates execute juſtice in God's name; whence they are ſtyled Gods, as being his lieutenants, adminiſtering that judgment which belongs originally and principally to him. Now for this ſenſe, neither is it ſo proper, or convenient here; it agreeing only to ſome particular perſons, and to ſome peculiar actions of them; inſomuch, that others preſuming to act, according to that manner or kind, in Jeſus's name, ſhall thereby become

Jer. vii. 13. xxvi. 5. xiv. 14. Jam. v. 10. Jo. v. 43. Ezr. v. 1. 2 Cor. v. 20.

Rom. xiii. 4. Deut. i. 17.

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become uſurpers and deceivers. We (and to us all this precept is directed) ſhall heinouſly tranſgreſs our duty, doing any thing thus in his name, without his letters of credence; without being ſpecially called or ſent, or being duly by him authoriſed thereto. SERM. IV.

Theſe and ſuch like ſenſes the preſent matter doth not well admit: the reſt that ſuit thereto I ſhall with ſome diſtinction in order repreſent.

I. To do in another's name ſometime doth ſignify to do it out of affection or honour to another; for another's ſake, becauſe we love or eſteem him; ἐν τῷ ὀνόματι being equivalent to ἕνεκα τοῦ ὀνόματος, and διὰ τὸ ὄνομα. Thus it is ſaid, *Whoſoever ſhall give you a cup of water to drink in my name; becauſe ye are Chriſt's*, (is added by way of interpretation, that is, out of reſpect to Chriſt, becauſe of your relation to him,) *ſhall not loſe his reward.* And thus ſurely we ought to do every thing in Jeſus's name: all our actions ought to proceed from a principle of grateful love and reverence towards our gracious Redeemer. *Let all your actions be done in charity*, ſaith the Apoſtle; if in charity to our neighbour, then much more in love to him, for whoſe ſake we are eſpecially bound to love our neighbour. Upon any undertaking, or applying ourſelves to action, we ſhould ſo reflect thereupon, as to conſider, whether that we are going about be apt to pleaſe him, and conducible to his honour; if ſo, remembering what he hath done and ſuffered for us, (what excellent bleſſings he hath purchaſed for us, what exceeding benefits he hath conferred upon us,) we ſhould out of love and reſpect to him readily perform it; but if it otherwiſe appear diſpleaſing or diſhonourable to him, we ſhould, from the ſame principles, carefully decline it. The duty is certain, and the reaſon thereof evident; for inducement to the practice thereof, obſerve St. Paul's example; who thus repreſents himſelf in the main employment of his life,

Compare Mark ix. 41. Matt. x. 41. xxiv. 9. xix. 29. Matt. xviii. 5. 1 Cor. xvi. 14.

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SERM. IV. acting, *The love of Christ constrains us; judging this, that he died for all, that they who live might not live to themselves, but to him that died and rose for them:* The love of Christ, begot and maintained by a consideration of his great benefits conferred on him, was the spring that set St. Paul on work, that excited and urged him forward to action. Thus doing, we shall do in Jesus's name; but if we act out of love to ourselves, (to promote our own interests, to gratify our own desires, to procure credit or praise to ourselves,) we act only in our own names, and for our own sakes; not in the name, or for the sake of Jesus.

φιλοτιμούμεθα αὐτῷ εὐάρεστοι εἶναι. 2 Cor. v. 9. 14. 1 Thess. ii. 6. Tit. i. 11. 1 Pet. v. 2. Philipp. i. 15. Matt. xxiii. 5.

II. To do in another's name implies doing (chiefly) for the interest or advantage of another, upon another's behalf or account, as the servants or factors of another. For, when the business is another's, and the fruit or benefit emergent belong to another, he that prosecutes that business may well be, and is commonly, supposed to act in that other's name. Thus our Saviour is in St. John's Gospel expressed *to come, to speak, to act in God's name*; because he did God's business, *(the work which God gave him to accomplish)* and entirely *sought the glory of God*, as he there himself often avouches and professes. And thus, in imitation of him, ought we also to do all things in his name; remembering that we *are not our own men, but the servants of Jesus*, (servants to him not only by nature, as to our Maker and Preserver, but by purchase, as to our Redeemer, who bought us with the greatest price; and by compact also, we having freely undertaken his service, and expecting wages from him,) that we have therefore no business or employment properly our own, but that all our business is (or should be) to serve him, and promote his glory; *Whether we eat or drink, or whatever we do, we should do all to the glory of our Lord.* Whatever, I say, we do, we therefore should perform it with this formal reference, as it were, toward Jesus,

John vii. 18. viii. 54. x. 25. v. 43. 36. vi. 28. ix. 3, 4. 1 Cor. vi. 19. vii. 23. Heb. ix. 12. 1 Pet. i. 18. Rom. xiv. 8, 9.

1 Cor. x. 31.

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Jesus, as his servants, from conscience of the duty we owe to him; with intention therein to serve him; in expectation of reward only from him. So doth St. Paul (in prosecution of this same precept) beneath in this chapter enjoin us, that, *whatever we do, we perform it heartily, as to the Lord, and not to men, knowing* (or considering) *that from the Lord we shall receive the recompence of the inheritance; for that we serve the Lord Christ.* In like manner otherwhere he teaches us to do what we do, *not as pleasers of men,* (not upon any inferior accounts) *but as servants of Christ, knowing and considering that we have a Master in heaven.* But, SERM. IV. Col. iii. 23, 24. Eph. vi. 6. 9.

III. Doing in another's name imports frequently doing by the appointment and command, or by the commission and authority of another. Ἐν ποίᾳ δυνάμει καὶ ἐν ποίῳ ὀνόματι; *By what power, and in what name have ye done these things?* say the High Priests to the Apostles; that is, who did appoint or authorize you to do thus? Their answer was ready; *In the name of Jesus,* who had sent, commissionated, and commanded them to preach and propagate that doctrine. And thus we are also bound to do all things in the name of Jesus, regulating all our actions by his law; conforming our whole lives to his will; acting, not only out of good principles, (principles of love and conscience) but according to right rules; the rules of his word and example, which he hath declared and prescribed to us: for what is done beside his warrant and will cannot be rightly esteemed done in his name; will not as so be avowed or accepted by him; no unjust or impious action will he upon any terms countenance or patronize. It was once a famous saying, *All mischief begins in Nomine Domini*; and much surely, more than one way, hath been done under the like notion or pretence: but this will not serve to excuse the doing of that, in the day of final reckoning for our actions. For *there will be many* (we are taught) *that shall* Acts iv. 7. John v. 36, 37. 43. xiv. 14. xvii. 18. Luke xxiv. 47. 2 Cor. v. 20. 1 Cor. vi. 11. 2 Thess. iii. 6. John xvi. 2. Matt. vii. 22.

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SERM. IV. *ſhall in that day, by ſpecious profeſſions of having done this or that in Chriſt's name,* veil their tranſgreſſions and their neglects of duty, *ſaying, Lord, Lord, have we not in thy name propheſied, and in thy name caſt out devils, and in thy name done many wonderful things?* who yet, our Lord himſelf aſſures us, ſhall have this reply made to them, *I never knew you; depart from me, ye workers of iniquity.* There will be thoſe that ſhall claim acquaintance with Chriſt in ſuch terms: *Lord, we have eaten and drank before thee; and thou haſt taught in our ſtreets;* whom yet our Lord will diſclaim with a *Depart from me, all ye workers of iniquity.* It is not, we ſee, propheſying in Chriſt's name, (or preaching about him) nor frequent attendance upon thoſe who do ſo, nor ſpeaking much or hearing much concerning him; it is not having great gifts or endowments conferred by Chriſt, (not even ſo great as that of working miracles;) it is not familiar converſe with Chriſt, or making frequent addreſſes to him, that can ſanctify all a man's actions, or ſo entitle them to the name of Chriſt, as to ſecure his perſon from being diſavowed and rejected by Chriſt; it is only the conforming all our actions to his holy laws, that can aſſure us to be acknowledged and accepted by him. This I could wiſh they would conſider, who ſeem, by ſuch pretences, to commend or excuſe their actions, although otherwiſe irregular and plainly contrary to the laws of Chriſt; ſuch as thoſe of being meek and charitable toward all men; living peaceably ourſelves, and endeavouring to promote peace among others; abſtaining from raſh and hard cenſures, from reviling and defaming others; paying reverence and obedience to ſuperiors; and the like laws of Chriſt, not only expreſs and manifeſt, but even of the higheſt rank and conſequence among them; being mainly conducing to that which our Lord eſpecially tenders, the public welfare and benefit of mankind; the violation whereof cannot be juſtified by

Luke xiii. 26.

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by pretending any ſpecial regard whatever to Chriſt, or any collateral performance done, whether truly or ſeemingly, in his name. We do but deceive ourſelves, if we conceit that, becauſe we think much, or ſpeak much of Jeſus, or have a zeal for ſomething good, all our actions are done in his name: no, it only can be juſtly impreſſed upon, can warrant and ſanctify actions truly good and agreeable to his law; it were an abuſe and forgery to do it, like ſtamping the king's name, or image, on counterfeit metal; upon braſs or tin, inſtead of gold or ſilver. Good intention and good principles are indeed, as it were, the form and ſoul of good actions; but their being juſt and lawful are the body and matter of them; neceſſarily alſo concurring to their eſſence and integrity; they cannot ſubſiſt without it, but muſt paſs, as it were, for ghoſts and ſhadows. We are therefore concerned in all our doings to have an eſpecial regard to Chriſt's law as their rule; that will render them capable of Chriſt's name, and denominate them Chriſtian. SERM. IV.

IV. Hereto we may add, that what we do in imitation of Jeſus, and in conformity to his practice, (that living rule and copy propoſed to us) we may be ſaid peculiarly to do in his name. As a picture uſeth to bear his name, whom it was made to repreſent, and whom it reſembles; ſo if we ſet Chriſt's example before us, and endeavour to tranſcribe it; if our life in the principal lineaments of ſanctity and goodneſs do reſemble his holy life; they may well bear his name. But if our practice be unlike and unſuitable to his, we cannot affix his name thereto, without great preſumption and abuſe; ſuch as would be committed, if to a draught of foul hue, and ugly features, we ſhould attribute the name of ſome moſt handſome and goodly perſon, of high worth and quality. To do thus in Jeſus's name (with ſuch a regard to him) is a duty often preſcribed to us, not only as relating to ſome caſes

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SERM. IV. and actions, (as when his charity, his patience, his humility, his meekness are signally commended to our imitation,) but generally, *He, that saith he abideth in him, ought as he walked, so himself also to walk*; that is, whoever professes himself a Christian ought to conform the whole tenour of his conversation to that of Jesus; to endeavour in every imitable perfection to resemble him. So that whenever we undertake any action, we should do well to look upon this pattern, thus, as it were, examining and enquiring of ourselves: What did my master in this or the like case? do I do the same thing, do I act from the same principles, do I proceed in the same manner as he did? am I herein his disciple and follower? If so, in his name let me go on cheerfully; if not, let me forbear. Doing thus will not be only according to our duty, but an especial help and furtherance of good practice.

Eph. v. 1, 2. 1 Cor. x. 1. John xv. 12, 13, 14. Heb. xii. 2. John xiii. 15. Phil. ii. 5. 1 Pet. ii. 21. 1 John ii. 6.

V. To do in another's name doth sometimes import doing by any power derived, or virtue imparted by another; for that a thing so done may be imputed, should be ascribed to that other. So, *Through thee*, saith the Psalmist, *will we push down our enemies, in thy name will we throw down those that hate us:* (through thee and in thy name signify the same thing.) So did the Apostles cast out devils, and perform their other miracles, in Jesus's name, (διὰ τοῦ ὀνόματος, *by his name*, it is sometime expressed,) that is, by a divine virtue imparted from him. To this I add another acceptation, scarce different (at least as to our purpose) from that, according to which doing in another's name signifies doing it in trust, or confidence reposed upon another, with expectation of aid, or hope of good success from another. So, *We rest on thee*, (said good king Asa) *and in thy name we go against this multitude*; in thy name, that is, hoping for assistance and success from thee. And thus it is said, that *David went out* against *Goliah in the name of the Lord of hosts*; that is, confiding in God's

Ἐν τῷ ὀνόματι. LXX. Psal. xliv. 5. lxxxix. 24. Matt. vii. 22. Mar. ix. 38. Acts iii. 6. iv. 10. 30. John xvii. 11.

2 Chron. xiv. 11.

1 Sam. xvii. 45.

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SERM. IV.

God's help, as his only weapon and defence: thus alſo did the holy Apoſtles work their miracles in Jeſus's name, ἐπὶ τῇ πίστει τοῦ ὀνόματος αὐτοῦ, *by faith in his name*, (ſaith St. Peter) *his name hath made this man ſtrong*; that is, we did only truſt in his divine power, and it was that power of his, which reſtored that weak perſon to his ſtrength. And thus alſo it is our duty to do all things in our Saviour's name; with faith and hope in him; wholly relying upon him for direction and aſſiſtance; expecting from him only a bleſſing and happy iſſue of our undertakings. What we do in confidence of our own wiſdom or ability, or in affiance upon the help of any other perſon or thing, we do in our own name, or in the name of that thing (or that perſon) in whom we ſo confide, to ourſelves, or to ſuch auxiliaries we ſhall be ready to attribute the ſucceſs, and to render the glory of the performance; *glorying in our own arm*, and *ſacrificing to our net*. But what we undertake only depending upon our Lord for ability and ſucceſs, may therefore bear his name, becauſe our faith derives the power from him, which enables us happily to perform it; ſo that the performance may truly be attributed to him, and to him we ſhall be apt to aſcribe it. And thus, I ſay, we are certainly obliged to do every thing in his name, (in his name alone) retaining a conſtant ſenſe both of our own infirmity, and of the impotency of all other created things, and conſequently a total diffidence both in ourſelves, and in them; but repoſing all our truſt in the direction and aſſiſtance of our All-wiſe and Almighty Lord; of Jeſus, to *whom all power in heaven and earth is given*, (who indeed had it originally by nature as God; but alſo farther hath acquired it by deſert and purchaſe;) into whoſe hands all things are given; and all things are put under his feet; who hath obtained this power in deſign to uſe it for our good; and is thereby always ready to help us in our need, if we have recourſe unto him, and rely upon him;

Acts iii. 16.

Hab. i. 16.

Mat. xxviii. 18. John iii. 35. xiii. 3. xvii. 2. Heb. i. 2. ii. 8. Eph. i. 22. 1 Cor. xv. 27. Phil. ii. 9. Apoc. v. 12.

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SERM. IV. him; making him what St. Paul ſtyles him, *our hope*; our only hope; renouncing all other confidences not ſubordinate to him. To do ſo is a duty evidently grounded as well upon the reaſon of the thing, as upon the will and command of God; to do otherwiſe is no leſs a palpable folly, than a manifeſt injury to God. For, in truth, neither have we or any other created thing any power, other than ſuch as he is pleaſed freely to diſpenſe [h]; and which is not continually both for its being and its efficacy ſubject to him, ſo that he may at his pleaſure ſubtract it, or obſtruct its effect: *No king is ſaved by the multitude of an hoſt; a mighty man is not delivered by much ſtrength; a horſe is a vain thing for ſafety:* whence it is plain, that we cannot upon any created power ground a ſolid aſſurance of ſucceſs in any undertaking [i]; it will be *leaning upon a broken reed*, (which cannot ſupport us, and will pierce our hands) both a vain and a miſchievous confidence; that will abuſe us, bringing both diſappointment and guilt upon us; the guilt of wronging our Lord many ways, by arrogating to ourſelves, or aſſigning to others, what he only doth truly deſerve, and what peculiarly of right belongs to him; withdrawing the ſame from him; implying him unable or unwilling to aſſiſt us, and do us good; neglecting to uſe that ſtrength which he ſo dearly purchaſed and ſo graciouſly tenders; ſo diſappointing him, and defeating, as it were, his purpoſes of favour and mercy towards us. On the other ſide, truſting only upon our Saviour, we act wiſely and juſtly, gratefully and officiouſly; for that, in doing ſo, we build our hopes upon moſt ſure grounds; upon a wiſdom that

1 Tim. i. 1.

Iſa. xxxvi. 6.

[h] Eccl. ix. 11. The race is not to the ſwift, nor the battle to the ſtrong.

By ſtrength ſhall no man prevail. 1 Sam. ii. 9. Pſal. xxxiii. 17. cxlvi. 3. xliv. 3.

[i] Iſa. xliii. 11. Beſide me there is no Saviour. Hoſ. xiii. 4. 10. Pſal. cvi. 21. Jer. xiv. 8.

cannot

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cannot be deceived; upon a ſtrength that cannot be withſtood; upon a goodneſs that hath no limits; upon a fidelity that can never fail. For that we act with an humility and ſobriety of mind ſuitable to our condition, and to the reaſon of things; for that we thereby declare our good opinion of him, as only able, and very willing to do us good; for that we render him his juſt honour and due; we comply with his earneſt deſires, we promote his gracious deſigns of mercy and kindneſs toward us. Hence it is that every where in holy Scripture God ſo highly commends, ſo greatly encourages this duty of truſting alone in him; that he ſo ill reſents, and ſo ſtrongly deters from the breach or omiſſion thereof; *Thus ſaith the Lord, Curſed be the man that truſteth in man, and maketh fleſh his arm, and whoſe heart departeth from the Lord: for he ſhall be like the heath in the deſart, and ſhall not ſee when good cometh; but ſhall inhabit the parched places in the wilderneſs, in a ſalt land and not inhabited. Bleſſed is the man that truſteth in the Lord, and whoſe hope the Lord is: for he ſhall be as a tree planted by the waters, and that ſpreadeth out her roots by the river, and ſhall not ſee when heat cometh; but her leaf ſhall be green; and ſhall not be careful in the year of drought, neither ſhall ceaſe from yielding fruit:* thus in that place, thus in innumerable others we are threatened not only with diſappointment and bad ſucceſs in our undertakings, but with ſevere puniſhment, if we betake ourſelves to other ſuccours, and neglect or diſtruſt, or, in ſo doing, deſert God: but are encouraged, not only with aſſurance of proſperous ſucceſs, but of additional rewards, if entirely in our proceedings we depend upon and adhere to God. Thus we ſhould do in all, even our moſt common and ordinary, affairs, which no leſs than the reſt are ſubject to his power, and governed by his care. For you know how St. James doth reprehend it as a piece of naughty boaſting and arrogance, to ſay, *The morrow we will*

Pſal. cxlvi. 5. xl. 4. xliv. 6. xxxiii. 18. cxlvii. 11. xxxiv. 22. cxxv. 1. xxxi. 19. lxi. 4. xci. 4. cxviii. 8. lxxviii. 22. lxvi. 2. cxii. 7. Iſa. li. 5. lvii. 13. l. 7. xxvi. 3. Jer. xiv. 8. xvii. 5, 6, &c.

Matt. x. 29, 30. Jam. iv. 13.

go

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SERM. IV. *go to this city, and ſtay there a year, and trade and gain*; inſtead of ſaying, *if the Lord will, we ſhall live, and do this or that*; that is, to reſolve upon, undertake, or proſecute any affair without ſubmiſſion to God's will, and dependance on his providence: but eſpecially we ought, in matters and actions more ſpiritual, to practiſe this duty; for that to the performing of theſe, we have of ourſelves a peculiar impotence and unfitneſs; needing therefore a more ſpecial aſſiſtance from our Lord; that the ſucceſs of them more particularly depends upon him; that the glory of them in an eſpecial manner is appropriate, and, as it were, conſecrate to him.

If it be a folly and a crime, to think we can do any thing without God, it is much more ſo to think we can do any thing good without him; it is an arrogance, it is an idolatry, it is a ſacrilege much more vain and wicked to do ſo [k]. To imagine that we can, by the force of our own reaſon and reſolution, achieve any of thoſe moſt high and hard enterpriſes, to which by the rules of virtue and piety we are engaged; that we can, by our own conduct and proweſs, encounter and withſtand, defeat and vanquiſh thoſe ſo crafty, ſo mighty enemies of our ſalvation, (our own fleſhly deſires, the menaces and allurements of the world, the ſleights and powers of darkneſs,) is much a worſe preſumption, than in other affairs of greateſt difficulty to expect ſucceſs without the divine aſſiſtance and bleſſing, than in other moſt dangerous battles to think we can, *by our own bow, and by our own ſpear, ſave ourſelves*; that we can obtain victory otherwiſe, than from his hand and diſpoſal, who is the Lord of hoſts. Reaſon tells us, and experience alſo ſhews, and our Saviour hath expreſsly ſaid it, *That* (in theſe things) *without him* (without his eſpecial influence and bleſſing) *we can*

Pſal. xliv. 6.

John xv. 5.

[k] Οὔτε γὰρ ἀνθρώπινόν τι ἄνευ τῆς ἐκεῖ τὰ θεῖα συναναφορᾶς εὖ πράξεις. *Ant.* iii. 13.

do

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do nothing; he tells us, that we are but branches, inſerted into him; ſo that, without continually drawing ſap from him, we can have no life or vigour ſpiritual. The wiſeſt and beſt of men have, by their practice, taught us to acknowledge ſo much; to depend wholly upon him, to aſcribe all to him in this kind. *Why* (ſay St. Peter and St. John) *do ye wonder at this? or why gaze ye upon us, as if by our own power or piety we had made this man walk?—His name*, (the name of Jeſus) *through faith in his name, hath made this man ſtrong:* that acknowledgment indeed concerns a miraculous work; but ſpiritual works are in reality no leſs, they requiring as much or more of virtue ſupernatural, or the preſent interpoſition of God's hand to effect them; they make leſs ſhew without, but need as great efficacy within: ſo our Saviour, it ſeems, did imply, when he ſaid, *He that believes in me, the works that I do he ſhall do, and greater works than theſe.* Every good and faithful man doth not work miracles; yet ſomewhat greater, it ſeems, by the grace of Chriſt, *he performs:* however, to theſe St. Paul referred, when he affirmed, *I can do all things in Chriſt that ſtrengtheneth me*; nothing was ſo hard that he feared to attempt, that he deſpaired to maſter and go through with by the help of Chriſt; and, *Not*, ſaith he again, *that we are ſufficient of ourſelves to think any thing of ourſelves; but our ſufficiency is of God:* he was as ſenſible of his own inability, as he was confident in the gracious help of Chriſt. Thus ſhould we do all things in the name of Jeſus; and it is not only a duty to do it, but it may be a great encouragement to us, that we are capable of doing it; a great comfort to conſider, that in all honeſt undertakings we have ſo ready and ſo ſure an aid to ſecond and further us in them; confiding in which, nothing is ſo difficult, but we may eaſily accompliſh; (*a grain of faith* will be able *to remove mountains*;) nothing is ſo hazardous, but we may ſafely venture on; (*walking on the ſea, treading upon*

Acts iii. 12. 16.

John xiv. 12.

Phil. iv. 13.

2 Cor. iii. 5.

Οὐδὲν ἀδύνατον τούτοις ὑμῖν. Matt. xvii. 20. xxi. 21. Luke xvii. 6. Matt. xiv. 29.

SERM. IV. *upon ſerpents and ſcorpions,* daring *all the power of the enemy.)* In his name we may, if our duty or good reaſon calls us forth (how ſmall and weak ſoever, how deſtitute ſoever of defenſive arms, or weapons offenſive,) naked and unarmed, with a ſling and a ſtone, go out againſt the biggeſt and beſt armed Philiſtine, nothing doubting of victory: our weakneſs itſelf (if we be humbly conſcious and ſenſible thereof) will be an advantage to us (as it was to St. Paul;) to all effects and purpoſes, *the grace of our Lord will be ſufficient for us,* if we apply it, and truſt therein. But farther,

Luke x. 19.

2 Cor. xii. 9.

VI. To do in another's name may denote, to do it with ſuch regard to another, that we acknowledge (that, I ſay, we heartily and thankfully acknowledge) our hope of proſpering in what we do; our expectation of acceptance, favour, or reward to be grounded on him; that they are procured by his merits and means, are beſtowed only for his ſake. Thus our Saviour bids us to *offer our prayers in his name*; that is, repreſenting unto God his meritorious performances in our behalf, as the ground of our acceſs to God, of our hope to obtain from him what we requeſt. So alſo we are enjoined to *give thanks in his name*; that is, with perſuaſion and acknowledgment, that only in reſpect to him we become capable to receive or enjoy any good thing; that, in effect, all the bleſſings by divine mercy vouchſafed us have been procured by him for us, are through him conveyed unto us. And thus alſo we ſhould do all things in the name of Jeſus, offering all our deeds to God, as ſacrifices and ſervices unworthy of acceptance, both in themſelves, and as proceeding from us; but pleaſing and acceptable to God only for his ſake. We ſhould do well, upon all occaſions, to remember our natural condition, and the general ſtate of mankind; ſuch as it was before he did undertake, ſuch as it would have continued ſtill, had he not undertaken for it; that our

John xiv. 13. xv. 16. xvi. 23, 24.

Eph. v. 20. iii. 21.

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our race had forfeited and was fallen from God's favour; having injured him beyond all power of making him any reparation or satisfaction; that thence it was secluded from all means and hopes apparent of happiness, was exposed and tended downright unto misery; that we consequently had no ground to hope that God (from whom, no less in mind and in deed, than by reason of our guilt and state of condemnation, we were estranged,) would, in kindness, bestow any good upon us, or from us accept favourably any thing we should do. But that, by our Saviour's performances, the case is altered; he, by his entire obedience, having so pleased God, by his patient submission to God's will, having so appeased his anger, and satisfied his justice, that God is not only reconciled, but hath an especial favour, bears an earnest good-will toward us. That now the good things we possess, we may truly esteem as blessings, and enjoy them with real comfort, as proceeding from mercy and kindness; now what we honestly endeavour, we may hope shall please God; now we have a free access to God, and may cheerfully present our sacrifices of duty and devotion, with a full persuasion that they shall be accepted. But all this happiness, all these favours and privileges, we must always remember to come from the continued procurement and mediation of the Beloved; so as ever to be ready to acknowledge it, and to return our thanks therefore. To this sense that our Apostle here had an especial regard, the words immediately following imply—*Doing all in the name of the Lord Jesus, giving thanks to God and the Father, by him*; that is, in all things we do, taking occasion to render thanks to God, as for his sake being merciful and bountiful to us; bestowing upon us the good we enjoy, blessing our endeavours, accepting our performances. We must not conceit, that any regard, any mercy, any favour, any reward is due to us in equity, is in effect conferred upon us,

upon

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Rom. iii. 23. xi. 32. Gal. iii. 22.

Acts iii. 26. Eph. ii. 17. iii. 12.

Ἐν παῤῥησίᾳ. Eph. i. 6.

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SERM. IV. upon our personal score; (for, how mean things are we in comparison of his greatness; how vile and filthy things must we appear to his most pure and all-discerning eyes; how unworthy of his regard and of his affection must we needs take ourselves to be, if we do but well consider, and are acquainted with ourselves?) but that *in him* (i. e. for his sake, and by his means) *God hath blessed us with all spiritual blessings*, in him ἐχαρίτωσεν ἡμᾶς, *God hath favoured*, and cast his grace upon *us*; valuing us notwithstanding all our imperfections; loving us notwithstanding all the spots with which we are defiled; notwithstanding all the offences we have committed; for the relation and alliance we have to Jesus. Nor must we look on our services (the best we are able to perform) as in themselves grateful or satisfactory: for all of them, if we mark them well, we shall find not only quite *unprofitable to God*, but very defective in many respects; for, who can say, he performs any thing both in kind, in manner, in degree thoroughly right and good; with that ardency of love he owes to God, with that purity of intention, with that earnest vigour of spirit, with that undistractedness of mind, with which he should perform it? No; in all our flock we cannot pick out a sacrifice entire and unblemished; such as God requires, such as duty exacts of us. They need therefore (all our services need) to be commended and completed by the beloved Son's perfectly well-pleasing performances; they need to be cleansed and hallowed, by passing through the hands of our most holy and undefiled High-priest; to become sweet and savoury (or to receive that ὀσμὴν εὐωδίας, which St. Paul speaks of) from being offered up *in his censer*. In fine, as all our actions should, in our intention, be works of religion dedicated to God's service and honour; sacrifices, as it were, of gratitude and homage to God; so they ought all to be offered up in the name of Jesus. I add farther,

Eph. i. 3. 6.

Heb. vii. 26.

Eph. v. 2. Rev. viii. 3. 5.

VII.

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VII. Lastly, that to do in the name of Jesus, may well imply doing with invocation of him: thus we may understand that place of St. James, where the elders are advised *to pray, and anoint the sick in the Lord's name*, for, to anoint them, imploring our Lord's blessing upon them, and upon those means used for their cure. And thus St. Chrysostom expounds the words; do all in Jesus's name, *that is*, saith he, *imploring him for your helper in all things; always first praying to him, undertake your business*[1]. Doing thus, will indeed Christen and consecrate our actions; for *all things*, saith our Apostle, *are sanctified by the word of God, and prayer*; that is, by God's blessing implored, and obtained by prayer; or, if God's word be there taken for his law, or revealed will, it is there signified, that our actions are not only sanctified by their lawfulness, or conformity to that good rule, God's declared will; but also by the invocation of his name; however, all our actions, it seems, are unhallowed and profane, if not accompanied with devotion[m]. That to do thus is our duty, appears by those frequent injunctions, to *pray indefinently*, to *pray always*, to *abide instantly in prayer*; which do not only import, that we should pray often, and continue with patience and earnestness in prayer; but that we should annex it to, or interpose it among, all our actions, undertaking nothing (at least of consideration or moment) without it. We should do it (our Saviour commands) ἐν παντὶ καιρῷ, that is, *on every occasion*: and St. Paul gives the same direction; *Praying*, says he, ἐν παντὶ καιρῷ, *on all opportunities*,

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Jam. v. 14.

1 Tim. iv. 5.

1 Thess. v. 17. Luk. xviii. 1. Ro. xii. 12. Col. iv. 2. Ἐκτενῶς.

Luke xi. 36.

Eph. vi. 18.

[1] *In locum.* Αὐτὸν καλῶν βοηθὸν, ἐπὶ πάντων πρότερον αὐτῷ εὐχόμενος, ἅπτου τῶν πραγμάτων.

[m] Δεῖ πάσης τῆς πράξεως προηγεῖσθαι τὴν προσευχήν. *M. Erem.*

Μηδὲν μήτε ποιῶμεν μήτε λέγωμεν πρὶν ἢ τὸν Θεὸν καλέσαι καὶ παρακαλέσαι συνεφάπτεσθαι τῶν ἐν χερσὶν ἡμῖν ἁπάντων. *Chrys.*

Τοῦτο δέγε πάντες ὅσοι τῆ κατὰ βραχὺ σωφροσύνης μετέχουσιν ἐπὶ πάσῃ ὁρμῇ καὶ σμικροῦ τῆ μεγάλου πράγματος θεὸν αἰεί τε καλοῦσιν. *Plato. Tim.* *Vid. Epist.* 8. *Arr. Epict.* 11. 18.

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SERM. IV. *with all prayer and ſupplication in ſpirit*; (in ſpirit, that is, I take it, *in our hearts* at leaſt, and with ſecret elevations of our mind, if not with our mouth and voice.) And more explicitly otherwhere ſaith he, *Be careful for nothing, but in every thing* (in all your affairs) *by prayer and ſupplication, with thankſgiving, let your requeſts be made known to God*[n]. And thus to do (to accompany all our undertakings with prayer) we are indeed concerned upon many accounts. We need God's direction (being ourſelves very blind and ignorant) in the choice of what we attempt; that our ends and deſigns may be good, conducible to God's honour, and our own true advantage. For, as the Prophet tells us, *The way of man is not in himſelf, neither is it in man that walketh to direct his ſteps*; and, as the Wiſe Man adds, *Man's goings are of the Lord; how then can a man underſtand his own way?* (implying, ſince God only knows what is beſt for us, that we of ourſelves without his direction know not what to do, whither to go.) The holy Pſalmiſt ſignifies the ſame in thoſe words, (very encouraging to the practice of this duty) *What man is he that feareth the Lord?* (that feareth him, that is, who worſhippeth him, and ſeeketh his guidance,) *him ſhall he teach in the way that he ſhall chooſe.* We need alſo (being ourſelves not only weak and infirm, but inconſtant and unſtable) God's aſſiſtance, and upholding hand in the purſuance of our well-choſen deſigns, (that we may uſe the beſt means, and proceed in a ſtraight courſe; that we may perſiſt upright and ſteady in our proceedings,) that which the Wiſe Man ſeems to call, the eſtabliſhing of our thoughts and promiſes, as a conſequence, upon our ſeeking God's aſſiſtance in our actions, and relying

Eph. v. 19. Ἐν καρδίᾳ.
Phil. iv. 6, 7. Ἐν παντί.
Job xviii. 7. Iſa. xxx. 1. Hoſ. x. 6. Prov. i. 25. 30. Pſal. cvi. 13. xvi. 7. lxxiii. 24. cvii. 11. Jer. x. 23. Prov. xx. 24. xvi. 9.
Pſal. xxv. 12. 9.

[n] Bene ac ſapienter majores inſtituerunt, ut rerum agendarum, ita dicendi initium a precationibus caperetur; quod nihil rite, nihilque providenter homines ſine Deorum immortalium ope, conſilio, honore auſpicarentur. *Plin. in Paneg.*

thereon;

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thereon; *Commit*, saith he, *thy works unto the Lord, and thy thoughts shall be established*; (thou shalt drive on thy good purposes steadily, without stumbling or falling; at least irrecoverably.) So the Psalmist assures us concerning a good man; *The steps of a good man are ordered by the Lord; none of his steps shall slide: though he fall, he shall not utterly be cast down; for the Lord upholdeth him with his hand.* We also farther, as to the final success of our affairs, stand in need of God's blessing; that he, upon whose will altogether depends the disposal of all events, should bestow a good issue unto our endeavours, that they prove not matter of discouragement or discomfort to us; that which also the Psalmist assures us of obtaining, upon condition of our imploring and depending upon God for it: *Commit thy way*, saith he, *unto the Lord; trust also in him, and he shall bring it to pass.* We do thus need in all our affairs the direction, assistance, and blessing of our Lord; but shall not have them without prayer; for the rule is, *Ask and have, seek and find.* Without asking we are not likely to obtain those gifts; without seeking we must not hope to find those benefits from God. If we are so proud as to think we do not need them, or so negligent as not to mind them, or so distrustful of the divine power or goodness, that we imagine he cannot or will not afford them to us, we are like to be so unhappy as to want them. God expects from us, that we should, in whatever we do, acknowledge him: (it is the Wise Man's expression, *In all thy ways acknowledge him, and he shall direct thy paths*;) acknowledge him as the only faithful guide and counsellor; as the only sufficient helper and protector; as the only free arbitrator and donor of good success. Nothing therefore is well done, which is not thus done: we cannot be satisfied in what we do; we cannot hope for a comfortable end thereof; we cannot expect a blessing from God, if we have refused, or if we

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Prov. xvi. 3. Ps. xxxvii. 23, 24. Ps. xxxvii. 5. cxix. 5. 133. Luke xi. 9, 10. John xiv. 13. Psal. ix. 10. Prov. iii. 6.

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SERM. IV. have neglected the recommending our proceedings to his care. We can, I ſay, do nothing; not eat, not ſleep, not trade, not travel, not ſtudy with any true content, any reaſonable ſecurity, any ſatisfactory hope, if we have not firſt humbly implored God's favour; committing ourſelves and our buſineſs into his hand, that hand which diſpenſeth all good, which alone can keep off all danger and miſchief from us. *God ſhall ſend his Angel before thee:* ſo did our father Abraham ſend his ſervant about his buſineſs; having queſtionleſs before commended it to God by prayer. *God Almighty give you mercy before the man:* ſo did Jacob give his ſons their diſpatches toward Egypt. In ſuch a manner did we enter upon all our affairs, we could not but be full of hope, and void of care concerning them; for that commonly we are ſo full of anxiety about the event of what we undertake, whence doth it ariſe, but from our neglect of this duty? for, having committed our buſineſs into ſo ſure a hand, how could we farther be ſolicitous about it? Had we, according to St. Peter's advice, *caſt our care upon the Lord*; or *caſt our burden upon him*, (as the Pſalmiſt exhorts us;) had we duly ſought and invoked him, who *never faileth them that ſeek him*, who *is nigh to all them that call upon him*; we ſhould not have ſuch a load of troubleſome care reſting upon us; our hearts would be light and free as to all theſe things; we ſhould be ſecure, that nothing very bad, or diſaſtrous, could befall us; we ſhould experience it true, what the Prophet affirms in that prayer or pſalm to God; *Thou wilt keep him in perfect peace, whoſe mind is ſtayed on thee: Be careful for nothing*, St. Paul bids us; *but in every thing let your requeſts be made known to God:* if we perform the latter part, the former will naturally be conſequent thereon. Thus, in the laſt place, ſhould we do all things in the name of Jeſus, (upon all occaſions praying to him, or, which is all one, to God

Gen. xxiv. 7.
Gen. xliii. 14.
1 Pet. v. 7.
Pſal. lv. 22.
Pſal. ix. 10.
Old Tranſl. lxx. 4.
Pſal. cxlv. 18.
cxii. 7, 8.
Iſa. xxvi. 3.
Phil. iv. 6.

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God in his name,) which that we may do, (that we are allowed and encouraged to do it) is also a privilege, and an advantage unvaluable.

In so many ways and particular respects may we, and ought we to perform all we do in the name of Jesus: we should do every thing out of grateful affection and respect to him, as our chief principle; every thing as his servants, aiming especially at the pleasing of him and promoting his honour, as our principal end; every thing according to his will and commandment, as our constant rule; every thing after his example, as our best pattern; every thing in confidence of his gracious assistance and blessing, as our only strength and support; every thing with hope of acceptance purely upon his account; every thing with thankful sense and acknowledgment to God for the mercies and favours conveyed unto us by his means, conferred upon us for his sake; every thing with humble invocation of him, or with prayer to God in his name: in sum, every thing with a due and proper regard had to him; so that he be not passed over or left out in any thing we undertake; but come always into consideration, according as our relations to him and our obligations to him do require. In the performances of which duties the life indeed of our religion (of all our good practice, of all our devotion,) doth consist.

To all this I shall only subjoin the mention of one general duty, implied in all and each of those we have propounded, which is this:

VIII. That our Lord Jesus should be frequently (and in a manner continually; always, as to the habitual disposition of our souls, actually upon all fit occasions) present to our minds and thoughts. This, I say, is plainly implied in the former duties. For, how is it possible we should perform all our actions (yea, utter all our words,) with any sort of

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SERM. IV. regard to him, if we ſeldom think of him? Such is the nimbleneſs and activity of our minds, that it is feaſible enough to do thus; and, in reſpect to other objects, we commonly experience it done; for *animus eſt ubi amat*; whatever we affect, our mind, however otherwiſe employed, will be thinking on it, it is hard to reſtrain our thoughts from it; (the covetous man's heart will be among his bags; the voluptuous man's mind will be in his diſhes; the ſtudious perſon will be muſing on his notions, do he what he can:) why then may we not as well, as often direct our minds toward our Lord, and mix the remembrance of him with all other employments or entertainments of our thoughts? To do ſo is ſurely very requiſite, and very expedient toward our good practice. Things far diſtant, or long abſent, can have ſmall efficacy, or influence: it is ſo, we ſee, in natural, and it is no leſs ſo in moral cauſalities; wherein repreſentation to the fancy and memory have a force anſwerable to that, which real conjunction and approximation have in nature. As the heat and light of the ſun, the farther he goes, and the longer he ſtays from us, do the more, proportionably, decreaſe; ſo according to our leſs frequently and leſs ſeriouſly thinking upon any object, our affection and our reſpect thereto decay. If therefore we deſire, according to our duty, to maintain in our hearts ſuch diſpoſitions (due affection and due reverence) toward Jeſus; if we intend to ſuit our actions accordingly with due regard to him; we ſhould, in order to thoſe purpoſes, apply this ſo neceſſary and uſeful mean, of frequently bending our minds toward him; the doing of which, in likelihood, will conduce much to the ſanctifying our affections, and to the governing our actions in a conſtant performance of our duty. For we can hardly ſure (admitting we do ſeriouſly believe him to be ſuch as we profeſs to believe him) with any competent attention think of him, but that thought will be apt to reſtrain

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restrain us from doing ill, to incite us to do well; SERM. since together with that thought, some of his ex- IV. cellent perfections, some of our principal relations, and some of our great obligations to him (each of which hath much virtue and force to those purposes) will interpose and represent themselves. Frequently Acts x. 38. thinking of him, we shall sometimes apprehend him with inceſſant toil labouring in the service of God, and in promoting the welfare of men; sometimes we shall imagine him undergoing all kind of contumelies and bitter pains, suffering by the cruel hands and tongues of spiteful men; we shall, as it were, behold him bleeding under the scourge, and hanging upon the cross for our sakes. Sometimes he will appear to our minds crowned with majesty, reigning in sovereign power and glory, having all things in subjection under his feet; sometimes also he will be represented as our Judge, before whose tribunal we must all shortly stand, and be obliged to render an account of all our doings: which thoughts passing through our minds, will be apt to make some impression upon our hearts, to have some influence upon our actions. For, can that most amiable and most venerable *idea* of a person so entirely pure and holy, so meek and humble, so full of benignity and charity toward all men (particularly toward ourselves) be otherwise than apt to beget some especial love and reverence toward him; than incline us strongly to do well, yea, than teach us what and how we should do so, in conformity to such a pattern set before us? it occurring to our thoughts, that he is our Lord and Master (who made us, and maintains us; who purchased us to himself, and redeemed us from miserable slavery by his own heart-blood;) how can it fail to raise in us some awe, some sense of duty toward him? Will not the apprehension of what he did and what he suffered for us powerfully mind us, that, according to all justice and equity, in all ingenuity and gratitude we are bound

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SERM. IV. to do only that which will pleaſe him? If we think of Jeſus, when we are ſetting upon any action, ſhall we not thereupon be apt thus to interrogate ourſelves? Shall I do otherwiſe than he did, or would have done, ſo rendering myſelf unlike or contrary to him? Shall I be ſo unfaithful to my glorious Maſter, as to diſſerve him, or to neglect his ſervice? Shall I be ſo unworthy toward my gracious Redeemer, my beſt friend, my moſt bountiful benefactor, as to diſoblige him, to wrong him, to diſhonour him, to grieve him by thus doing? Shall I be ſo vain and raſh as to croſs him who is my King, able to control and ſubdue me; as to offend him who is my Judge, reſolved to condemn and puniſh me? Shall I wilfully forfeit that friendſhip and favour of his, upon which all my happineſs doth depend? Shall I procure his diſpleaſure and enmity, from which my utter ruin muſt inevitably follow? Such conſiderations have a natural connexion with our frequent thinking upon, and the preſence (as it were) of our bleſſed Saviour to our minds; which therefore may be commended to us as an excellent inſtrument of bettering our hearts and our lives.

To conclude: Let us all always remember, and conſider, that we are Chriſtians related unto Chriſt Jeſus, and called by his name, and as ſo, in his name let us do all things.

Lord of all power and might; who art the author and giver of all good things; graft in our hearts the love of thy name; increaſe in us true religion; nouriſh us with all goodneſs; and of thy great mercy keep us in the ſame; through Jeſus Chriſt our Lord.

SERMON

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SERMON V.

Of being Imitators of Chriſt.

1 COR. iv. 16.

I beſeech you be followers of me: or, I exhort you be imitators of me [a].

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ST. PAUL, by an impartial reflection upon his heart and life, being well aſſured, that he by the divine Spirit was enlightened with a certain knowledge of all neceſſary truth, and endued with plentiful meaſures of divine grace; being conſcious of a ſincere zeal in himſelf to honour God, and benefit men; being ſatisfied, that with integrity he did ſuit his converſation to the dictates of a good conſcience, to the ſure rule of God's law, and to the perfect example of his Lord; that his intentions were pure and right, his actions warrantable, and the tenor of his life conſpicuouſly blameleſs, doth, upon all occaſions (not out of any ſelf-conceitedneſs, arrogance, or oſtentation, from which he, by frequent acknowledgment of his own defects and his miſcarriages, and by aſcribing all the good he had, or did, to the grace and mercy of God, doth ſufficiently clear himſelf;

[a] Παρακαλῶ ὑμᾶς μιμηταί μου γίνεσθε.

but

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SERM. V. but from an earneſt deſire to glorify God, and edify his diſciples) deſcribe, and ſet forth his own practice, propoſing it as a rule, preſſing it upon them as an argument, an encouragement, an obligation to the performance of ſeveral duties. So by it he directeth and urgeth the Epheſians to a charitable compliance, or complaiſance; a ſweet and inoffenſive demeanour toward other: *Give no offence*, ſaith he, *neither to the Jews, nor to the Gentiles, nor to the church of God: even as I pleaſe all men in all things, not ſeeking my own profit, but the profit of many, that they may be ſaved: be ye followers of me:* ſo he guides and provokes the Philippians to endeavours of proficiency in grace, and the ſtudy of Chriſtian perfection: *Nevertheleſs*, ſaith he to them, *whereto we have already attained, let us walk by the ſame rule, let us mind the ſame thing: brethren, be followers together of me, and mark ſuch as walk ſo, as ye have us for an enſample.* By the like inſtance and argument, he moveth the Theſſalonians to a ſober and orderly converſation, to induſtry in their calling, to ſelf-denial, and a generous diſregard of private intereſt: *For yourſelves*, ſaith he, *know how ye ought to follow us: for we behaved not ourſelves diſorderly among you; neither did we eat any man's bread for nought; but wrought with labour and travail day and night, that we might not be chargeable to any of you; not becauſe we have not power, but to make ourſelves an example to you to follow us.* The ſame perſons he commendeth, as having by this means been induced to a patient conſtancy in faith and good works: *Ye know*, ſaith he, *what manner of men we were among you for your ſake, and ye became followers of us, and of the Lord, having received the word in much affliction.* The practice of all virtue and goodneſs he alſo thus recommendeth under this rule and obligation: *Thoſe things, which ye have learned, and received, and heard, and ſeen in me, do; and the God of peace ſhall be with you.* Thus in our text (referring it to the context) he urgeth the Chriſtians, his diſciples at Corinth, to fidelity

1 Cor. x. 32, 33. iv. 16.

Phil. iii. 16, 17.

2 Theſſ. iii. 7, 8, 9.

1 Theſſ. i. 5, 6.

Phil. iv. 9.

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fidelity and diligence in the charges and affairs committed to them, to humility, patience, and charity; wherein he declareth himſelf to have ſet before them an evident and exact pattern. Which practice of St. Paul doth chiefly teach us two things; that we be careful to give, and that we be ready to follow good example: the latter of which duties more directly and immediately agreeth to the intent of this place; and it therefore I ſhall only now inſiſt upon: the ſubject and ſcope of my diſcourſe ſhall be to ſhew, that it is our duty and concernment to regard the practices of good men, and to follow their example. To which purpoſe we may obſerve, SERM. V.

I. That it is the manner of the Apoſtles, upon all occaſions, to inculcate this duty: we heard St. Paul: hear St. James: *Take*, ſaith he, *my brethren, the prophets, who have ſpoken in the name of the Lord, for an example of ſuffering affliction: Ye have heard of the patience of Job, and have ſeen the end of the Lord; that the Lord is very pitiful and of tender mercy:* and the Apoſtle to the Hebrews: *We deſire*, ſaith he, *that every one of you do ſhew the ſame diligence to the full aſſurance of hope unto the end; that ye be not ſlothful, but followers of them, who through faith and patience inherit the promiſes:* and again, *Wherefore ſeeing we are alſo compaſſed about with ſo great a cloud of witneſſes, let us lay aſide every weight, and the ſin which doth ſo eaſily beſet us, and let us run with patience the race that is ſet before us.* And St. Peter; *Ye wives, be in ſubjection to your own huſbands; even as Sarah obeyed Abraham, calling him Lord.* And wherever the eminent deeds of holy men are mentioned, it is done with an intimation at leaſt, or tacit ſuppoſition, that we are obliged to follow their example. Jam. v. 10. Jam. v. 11. Heb. vi. 11, 12. Heb. xii 1. 1 Pet. iii. 1. 6.

II. We may conſider that to this end (that we might have worthy patterns to imitate) the goodneſs of God hath raiſed up in all ages ſuch excellent perſons, furniſhing them with rare endowments, and with continual influences of his grace aſſiſting them, to this

SERM. V. this purpoſe, that they might not only inſtruct us with wholeſome doctrine, but lead us alſo by good example in the paths of righteouſneſs. For certainly what St. Paul ſaith concerning the ſins and puniſhments of bad men, is no leſs applicable to the virtuous deeds and happy examples of good men: *All theſe things happened unto them for enſamples; and they are written for our admonition, upon whom the ends of the world are come.* 1 Cor. x. 11.

III. *They are written for our admonition:* it was a ſpecial deſign of God's Providence in recording and recommending to our regard the divine hiſtories. They were not framed as monuments of a fruitleſs memory and fame to them; they were not propoſed to us as entertainments of our curioſity, as objects of wonder, as matters of idle diſcourſe; that unconcernedly we ſhould gaze upon them, or talk about them, as children look on fine gays: but they are ſet before us, as copies to tranſcribe, as lights to guide us in our way to happineſs[b]. So that if we will not ungratefully fruſtrate the intentions of Divine Providence for our good, we muſt diſpoſe ourſelves to imitate thoſe illuſtrious patterns of virtue and piety.

IV. We may farther conſider, that, in the nature of the thing itſelf, good example is of ſingular advantage to us, as being apt to have a mighty virtue, efficacy, and influence upon our practice: which conſideration ſhould much engage us to regard it, applying it as an inſtrument of making ourſelves good, and conſequently of becoming happy. Good example is, as I ſay, of exceeding advantage to practice upon many accounts.

[b] Μεγίστη δὲ ὁδὸς πρὸς τὴν τῶν καθήκοντος εὕρεσιν καὶ ἡ μελέτη τῶν θεοπνεύστων γραφῶν· ἐν ταύταις γὰρ ἡ αἱ τῶν πράξεων ὑποθῆκαι εὑρίσκονται, ἢ αἱ βίοι τῶν μακαρίων ἀνδρῶν ἀναγραπτοι παραδιδόμενοι οἷον εἰκόνες τινὲς ἔμψυχοι τῆς κατὰ θεὸν πολιτείας, τῷ μιμήματι τῶν ἀγαθῶν ἔργων προκείμεναι. *Baſ. ad Greg. Ep.* 2.

1. Ex-

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1. Examples do more compendiouſly, eaſily, and pleaſantly inform our minds, and direct our practice, than precepts, or any other way or inſtrument of diſcipline. Precepts are delivered in an univerſal and abſtracted manner, naked, and void of all circumſtantial attire, without any intervention, aſſiſtance, or ſuffrage of ſenſe; and, conſequently, can have no vehement operation upon the fancy, and ſoon do fly the memory; like flaſhes of lightning, too ſubtle to make any great impreſſion, or to leave any remarkable footſteps, upon what they encounter; they muſt be expreſſed in nice terms, and digeſted in exact method; they are various, and in many disjointed pieces conſpire to make up an entire body of direction: they do alſo admit of divers caſes, and require many exceptions, or reſtrictions, which to apprehend diſtinctly, and retain long in memory, needs a tedious labour, and continual attention of mind, together with a piercing and ſteady judgment. But good example, with leſs trouble, more ſpeed, and greater efficacy, cauſes us to comprehend the buſineſs, repreſenting it like a picture expoſed to ſenſe, having the parts orderly diſpoſed and completely united, ſuitably clothed and dreſſed up in its circumſtances; contained in a narrow compaſs, and perceptible by one glance, ſo eaſily inſinuating itſelf into the fancy, and durably reſting therein: in it you ſee at once deſcribed the thing done, the quality of the actor, the manner of doing, the minute ſeaſons, meaſures, and adjuncts of the action; with all which you might not perhaps by numerous rules be acquainted; and this is the moſt facile, familiar, and delightful way of inſtruction, which is, by experience, hiſtory, and obſervation of ſenſible events. A ſyſtem of precepts, though exquiſitely compacted, is, in compariſon, but a *ſkeleton*, a dry, meagre, lifeleſs bulk, exhibiting nothing of perſon, place, time, manner, degree, wherein chiefly the fleſh and blood, the

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SERM. V. the colours and graces, the life and ſoul of things do conſiſt; whereby they pleaſe, affect, and move us: but example imparts thereto a goodly corpulency, a life, a motion, renders it conſpicuous, ſpecious, and active, transforming its notional univerſality into the reality of ſingular ſubſiſtence. This diſcourſe is verified by various experience; for we find all maſters of art and ſcience explicating, illuſtrating, and confirming their general rules and precepts by particular examples. Mathematicians demonſtrate their *theorems* by *ſchemes* and *diagrams*, which, in effect, are but ſenſible inſtances; orators back their *enthymemes* (or rational argumentations) with *inductions* (or ſingular examples); philoſophers allege the practice of Socrates, Zeno, and the like perſons of famous wiſdom and virtue, to authorize their doctrine: politics and civil prudence is more eaſily and ſweetly drawn out of good hiſtory, than out of books *de Republica*. Artificers deſcribe *models*, and ſet patterns before their diſciples, with greater ſucceſs, than if they ſhould deliver accurate rules and precepts to them. For who would not more readily learn to build, by viewing carefully the parts and frame of a well contrived ſtructure, than by a ſtudious enquiry into the rules of architecture; or to draw, by ſetting a good picture before him, than by merely ſpeculating upon the laws of perſpective; or to write fairly and expeditiouſly, by imitating one good copy, than by hearkening to a thouſand oral preſcriptions; the underſtanding of which, and faculty of applying them to practice, may prove more difficult and tedious, than the whole practice itſelf as directed by a copy? Neither is the caſe much different in moral concernments; one good example may repreſent more fully and clearly to us the nature of a virtue, than any verboſe deſcription thereof can do: in ſooner time, and with greater eaſe, we may learn our duty by regarding the deportment of ſome excellent perſon, than

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than by attending to many philosophical discourses concerning it[c]: for instance, if we desire to know what faith is, and how we should rely upon the Divine Providence, let us propose to our consideration the practice of Abraham; wherein we may see the father of the faithful leaving a most pleasant country, the place of his nativity, and questionless most dear unto him under that notion; deserting his home and fixed habitation, his estate and patrimony, his kindred and acquaintance, to wander he knew not where in unknown lands, with all his family, leading an uncertain and ambulatory life in tents, sojourning and shifting among strange people, devoid of piety and civility (among Canaanites and Egyptians), upon a bare confidence in the Divine protection and guidance; we may see him, aged ninety-nine years, sensible of his own natural impotence, and an equal incapacity in his consort as to such purposes, yet with a steady belief assuring himself, that from those dead stocks a numerous progeny should spring, and that he, who by all power of nature was unable to beget one child, should, by virtue of God's omnipotent word, become the father of a mighty nation: we may see him upon the first summons of the Divine command, without scruple or hesitancy, readily and cheerfully yielding up his only son, (the sole ground of his hope, and prop of his family, to whose very person the promise of multiplication was affixed,) to

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[c] *Xen. Apomn.* 4. It was Xenophon's observation, grounded upon his own experience, that the memory of Socrates's conversation did greatly profit his acquaintance. (Τὸ μιμνῆσθαι μὴ σαφόντος οὐ μικρὰ ὠφελεῖ τοὺς ἰωθότας αὐτῷ συνεῖναι.) And Seneca saith, that the crowd of philosophers, which followed the same wise man, derived more of their ethics from his manners than his words (plus ex moribus, quam ex verbis Socratis traxit). *Sen. Ep.* 11. And he that shall reflect upon the story concerning his behaviour, when he was by malicious envy persecuted to death, may perhaps be more edified thereby, than by all his subtle discourses about death, and the soul's state after it.

be

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SERM. V. be ſacrificed and ſlain; not objecting to his own reaſon the palpable inconſiſtency of counſels ſo repugnant, nor anxiouſly labouring to reconcile the ſeeming contrariety between the Divine promiſes and commands; but reſolved as it were (with an implicit faith in God) to believe things incredible, and to rely upon events impoſſible; contemplating theſe things, let us ſay what diſcourſe could ſo livelily deſcribe the nature of true faith, as this illuſtrious precedent doth.

Again, he that would learn how to demean himſelf in reſiſting the aſſaults of temptation, let him conſider that one carriage of Joſeph; of him, together withſtanding the courtſhips of an attractive beauty, and rejecting the ſolicitations of an imperious miſtreſs, advantaged by opportunities of privacy and ſolitude; when the refuſal was attended with extreme danger, and all the miſchiefs which the diſdain of a furious luſt diſappointed, of an outrageous jealouſy provoked, of a loving maſter's confidence abuſed, could produce; and all this by one of meaneſt condition, in a ſtrange place, where no interceſſion, favour, or patronage of friends could be had, no equal examination of his cauſe might be expected; of him doing this, merely upon principles of conſcience, and out of fear of God; (ſaying, *How can I do this great evil, and ſin againſt God?*) and he that conſiders this example, how can he be ignorant of his duty in the like caſe?

Again, would we learn wiſdom, conſtancy, and reſolution in the conduct of honeſt and worthy deſigns, let us ſet before our eyes the pattern of Moſes, and therein take notice, how he, obeying Divine inſtinct and direction, having embraced that noble purpoſe of reſcuing his countrymen from the Egyptian bondage, of ſettling them in a method of happy policy, and of bringing them into the promiſed land of their enjoyment, did behave himſelf in the execution thereof; with how indefatigable induſtry he ſoli-

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ſolicited their cauſe with a fickle, and deceitful, ſtu- SERM.
pid, and hard-hearted king; enduring frequent diſap- V.
pointments and repulſes, together with furious ſtorms
of anger, and moſt terrible menaces from him: how having there ſurmounted all obſtacles, and effectually enlarged the people from their reſtraint in Egypt, he led them on foot through a valley, encompaſſed with mountains of ſea; and after that undertook a tedious march (a march of 40 years) through a wild, barren, and dry ſolitude, (where no water was, but ſuch as iſſued from the ſtony bowels of a rock; no food, or means of ſubſiſtence, but ſuch as was ſupplied by the miraculous purveyance of Heaven,) in the meanwhile reſiſting the continual invaſions of open enemies, in great numbers with armed violence ſtriving to obſtruct his paſſage, and defeat his purpoſe; having alſo (which was more) his patience conſtantly exerciſed in ſupporting the froward perverſeneſs of a moſt incredulous and intractable people, which took all occaſions of complaint and mutiny againſt him; in conteſting with the factious rivality of envious nobles, who repined at his ſucceſſes, and maligned his authority among them; in bearing the indiſcreet and untoward prevarications of his own moſt intimate friends and neareſt relations, complying with the wicked humours and deſires of the people; in ſuſtaining many other perplexities and croſſes; all which notwithſtanding, he with inſuperable reſolution happily achieved his glorious undertaking: and will not this example, attentively regarded, beyond the power of any other means or method, explain to us the way of induſtry, courage, and perſeverance in good and worthy, though high and difficult enterpriſes?

One inſtance more, and that of all moſt pertinent to our occaſion: Would you be inſtructed, how faithfully to diſcharge the miniſterial, or any other office? With a ſteadfaſt attention then behold the excellent pattern of St. Paul; conſider how in all his deſigns he zealouſly and ſingly aimed at the honour and ſervice of God,

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SERM. V. neglecting his own ſafety, quiet, credit, and all worldly accommodations for the advancement of them: how affectionately he tendered the good and welfare of thoſe, the care of whoſe ſpiritual condition was commended to him, uſing all his ſkill, care, and ſtrength in promoting their edification; declaring himſelf for their good to be content, not only for a time to be abſent from the Lord, being deprived of that happineſs which he otherwiſe impatiently groaned for, and was fully aſſured of; but deſirous, as it ſeems, to be ſecluded for ever from his bliſsful preſence, by a dreadful *Anathema*, for their ſake: how prudently, meekly, and humbly he demeaned himſelf toward them; becoming all things to all men, forming himſelf into all allowable ſhapes and colours; undergoing all ſorts of cenſure and imputations, (of a deſpicable, an ignorant, a fooliſh perſon;) tempering his ſpeech and deportment to their capacities and needs, bearing their miſcarriages, and complying with their weakneſſes; parting freely with his own juſt liberty, pleaſure, and ſatisfaction, for their ſpiritual advantage: how generouſly he deſpiſed his own profit and eaſe, refuſing that ſupply he might with all reaſon and equity have required from them; chooſing to maintain himſelf with the labour of his own hands, and the ſweat of his brows, that he might render the Goſpel nowiſe burdenſome or offenſive to them: how vigilantly and courageouſly he withſtood the miſchievous endeavours of falſe brethren, and treacherous ſeducers; earneſtly contending for the Church's peace and quiet againſt factious ſpirits, and for the ſubſtantial truths of the Goſpel againſt the pernicious devices of heretics and falſe teachers: how patiently he ſuſtained all manner of pains, griefs, travels, wants, loſſes, hazards, diſtreſſes, diſappointments, affronts, and reproaches for the honour of God, the benefit of his ſpiritual children, the diſcharge of his duty, and ſatisfaction of his conſcience: theſe things, I ſay, regard, and then tell me, if he might not reaſonably inculcate this

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this admonition, *Imitate me*; and if his example be not of rare uſe to inſtruct us, how faithfully we ſhould in our reſpective charges and employments demean ourſelves. I might in like manner inſtance how excellent a rule of devotion the practice of the Royal Prophet may be unto us; how Elias's practice might teach us to be zealous champions for truth and righteouſneſs; how they who would be good judges, or honeſt patriots, may receive direction from the carriage of Samuel, Daniel, and Nehemiah [d]. But I proceed to ſay that farther, SERM. V.

II. Good examples do not only inform, but they perſuade and incline our reaſon to good practice, commending it to us by plauſible authority; a way of reaſoning the moſt plain, eaſy, and ſuitable to all men's capacities; leſs ſubject to error and doubt than any other in particular caſes; whereby as it is always more eaſy to know what is good and fit, ſo commonly it is moſt ſafe; there being few, who can ſo well diſcern what is good, as they may reſt in the judgments of others. For that wiſe and virtuous perſons do any thing, is a very probable argument, that we are obliged and concerned to do the like; ſeeing ſuch perſons may in all their actions be ſuppoſed to have an unbiaſſed regard to the rules of truth and juſtice. He therefore who can ſay, that Abraham, or David, or St. Paul, did ſo in ſuch a caſe, ſuppoſeth that he hath no ſmall reaſon to do the like; it is accounted pardonable, yea almoſt commendable, to err with ſuch perſons; becauſe it is done with good appearance of reaſon, ſeeing ſuch perſons were themſelves unlikely to err: *Will you*, ſaith Cicero, *commemorate to me Scipio's, and Cato's, and Lælius's, and ſay they did the ſame thing; though the thing diſpleaſes me, yet I cannot withſtand the authority of ſuch men: their authority is ſo great, that*

[d] Ὑπομονῆς ὢν διδάσκαλος ἄριστος ὁ τῦ μακαρίυ Ἰὼβ βίος, ἀνεξικακίας ὁ τῦ Μωσέως, πραότητος ὁ τοῦ Δαβὶδ, &c. *Chryſ. T. V.* p. 656.

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SERM. V. *it can cover even the ſuſpicion of a fault*[e]. 'Tis obvious in temporal concernments, how great a ſtroke this way of diſcourſe hath; how boldly men adventure their deareſt intereſts in following ſuch, whom they probably deem honeſt and able to guide them: for inſtance, in travelling, if one being ignorant or doubtful of his way happen to meet a perſon, whom he conceives able, and nowiſe concerned or diſpoſed to miſlead him, he without ſcruple follows him, and confidently relies on his direction. In like manner, all good men in the way of virtuous practice tending directly toward happineſs (our common journey's end;) it being their deſign, their intereſt, and their endeavour not to miſtake the way, not to deflect from the right and neareſt courſe thereto, men are apt to think it reaſonable and ſafe to accompany, in their progreſs, or to preſs after them in their ſteps: and ſurely, next to a clear and certain rule, there is not any more rational warrant for practice, and conſequently no better inducement thereto, than ſuch good precedents. Farther,

III. Examples do incite our paſſions, and impel them to the performance of duty. They raiſe hope, they inflame courage, they provoke emulation, they urge upon modeſty, they awaken curioſity, they affect fancy, they ſet in motion all the ſprings of activity. It may not be amiſs to ſhew how, particularly,

1. They raiſe hope, by diſcovering to us and aſſuredly proving the feaſibleneſs of matters propounded, or the poſſibility of ſucceſs in undertaking good deſigns, and that by the beſt and moſt convincing of arguments, experience. Nothing ſo depreſſeth hope, and advanceth deſpondency, as an apprehenſion of impoſſibility, or, which is equivalent thereto, an ex-

[e] Africanos mihi, et Catones, et Lelios commemorabis, et eos feciſſe idem dices, quamvis res mihi non placeat, tamen contra hominum auctoritatem probare non potuero. Magna eſt hominum auctoritas, et etiam tanta, ut delicti ſuſpicionem tegere poſſit. *Cic. in Verr.* iii.

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treme difficulty (appearing to ſurmount our preſents SERM. forces) in the buſineſs to be attempted: of ſuch a V. conceit deſperation ſeemeth a reaſonable conſequence. For τῶν ἀδυνάτων ἐφίεσθαι μανικὸν, *it is a madneſs to aim at impoſſibilities*; and ſuch, conſidering the great infirmity of human nature, its ſtrong propenſions to evil, and averſeneſs from good, together with the manifold impediments and allurements objecting themſelves in the way of good practice, all duties as barely repreſented in precepts, and preſſed by rational inducements, might ſeem to be, if good example did not clearly demonſtrate them to be poſſible, yea ſometimes facile; even thoſe, which upon a ſuperficial view do ſeem moſt difficult, and inſuperable by our weak endeavour. The Stoical doctrine, which deſcribed a fine and ſtately portraiture of virtue, and inculcated very ſtrict rules (a cloſe following of God and nature, a perfect victory over ſelf, the ſubduing all paſſions, and over-ruling all corporeal appetites; an entire freedom, compoſure, and tranquillity of mind; a total indifferency in reſpect of fortune, and all external events, with the like duties, rarely practiſed, although, upon all accounts, acknowledged conformable to reaſon,) was therefore by moſt rejected as uſeleſs, or exploded as ridiculous, as being preſumed to propound matters purely imaginary and impracticable: yet he that had ſeen this doctrine in great meaſure exemplified by Zeno, the firſt maſter of it, would have had no ſuch reaſon to contemn it, nor to deſpair of practiſing according to it, if he would ſeriouſly endeavour it: exemplified, I ſay, by Zeno, whereof we have an illuſtrious teſtimony from a ſolemn decree of the Athenians: ἐπειδὴ Ζήνων Μνασέᾳ, &c. Laert. in Zen. *Whereas Zeno, the ſon of Mnaſeas the Cittican, having many years profeſſed philoſophy in this city, and as well in all other things hath demeaned himſelf like a good man, as particularly exhorting the young men, who went to be inſtructed by him, hath provoked them to virtue, and ſobriety; withal exhibiting his own life a pattern of the beſt things anſwerable to the*

Chryſ. tom. i. p. 69.

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SERM. V. *diſcourſes he uſed to make; it is therefore auſpiciouſly decreed by the people, that Zeno the ſon of Mnaſeas be ſolemnly praiſed and crowned (according to the uſage) with a golden crown; and that a monument be erected for him at the public charge in the Ceramicum* (the place where thoſe were interred, who had bravely expoſed their lives for public defence.) This was indeed a noble atteſtation, and a comely reſpect exhibited to a virtuous converſation; making in ſome meaſure a ſatisfaction for the heinous affront done thereto, when, inſtead of honouring it with a crown, they rewarded it with a cup of poiſon, given to the excellent Socrates. Suitably to which teſtimony Seneca ſaith of Cleanthes, that his virtuous practice depended more upon the obſervation of Zeno's life, than the information of his doctrine. *Zenonem Cleanthes non expreſſiſſet, ſi eum tantummodo audiſſet: vitæ ejus interfuit, ſecreta perſpexit, obſervavit illum an ex formula ſua viveret. Cleanthes*, ſaith he, *had not ſo nearly reſembled Zeno, if he had only attended to his diſcourſes: he was preſent to his life, he took notice of his private carriage, he obſerved whether his practice did ſuit to his doctrine.* So that Stoiciſm itſelf, which ſpeaketh ſuch prodigies, was, it ſeems, founded not only upon big words, the iſſues of a ſpeculative fancy, but more upon the good practice of its firſt maſter and inſtitutor. And indeed he that would effectually perſuade the undertaking of any enterpriſe, muſt either ſuppoſe it, or prove it effectible; and the moſt eaſy, the moſt evident way of proving it is by example. *Men*, ſaith Pliny junior well, *are better inſtructed by examples, which have in them chiefly this advantage, that they do prove the things may be done which they enjoin.* And, *Human infirmity*, ſaith Salvian to the ſame purpoſe, *requires the aſſiſtance of example, that it may more eaſily now perform that which it knows others to have before done; all poſterity being admoniſhed by hearing that what hath once been done, may be done again.* And, *The example*, ſaith St. Bernard, *of a work done is a lively and efficacious oration, eaſily perſuading what we intend, by*

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by proving that feaſible, which we ſtrive to perſuade unto[f]. Upon which ſcore we therefore are exceedingly obliged to thoſe holy men, who by their practice have aſſured us, that the higheſt duties exacted of us by our religion (the mortification of unreaſonable deſires, the ſuppreſſion of irregular paſſions, the loving and bleſſing our enemies, the renouncing worldly vanities and pleaſures, the rejoicing in afflictions, the voluntary abdication of our eſtates in ſome caſes, yea, expoſing life itſelf to inevitable hazard and loſs,) are not chimerical propoſitions of impoſſible performances; but duties (if we ſhall ſeriouſly and vigorouſly apply our endeavours to them, and ſuffer our hopes to be elevated by their example) really practicable. Piety abſtractedly viewed in precept may ſeem an airy project, a name, a notion; but it being ſeen in example will prove a matter ſubſtantial, true, and feaſible. A direct and pure ſpeculation thereof may dazzle our ſight, and daſh our hopes; but as being reflected from perſons practiſing it, we may bear its luſtre, and hope to attain it. SERM. V.

2. Examples do inflame courage. So the Apoſtle to the Hebrews ſignifieth, when to this purpoſe he intimateth, that he mentioned and ſetteth before them the examples of the Patriarchs; that he thereby might excite their courage, and cauſe them reſolutely to undertake that obedience, and patiently to undergo thoſe afflictions, which they performed and ſuſtained; *that*, ſaith he, *ye be not ſlothful, but followers* Heb. vi. 12.

[f] Melius homines exemplis docentur, quæ imprimis hoc boni habent, quæ approbant, quæ præcipiunt fieri poſſe. *Plin. Jun. Paneg.*

Adjuvari ſe exemplis exoptat humana infirmitas, quo facilius ipſa nunc faciat, quæ alios feciſſe ante cognoſcat; dum admonetur auditu ætas omnis fieri poſſe, quod factum eſt. *Salv. ad Eccl. Catb.*

Sermo quidam vivus et efficax exemplum operis eſt, facile perſuadens quod intendimus, dum factibile probat eſſe quod ſuademus. *Bern. de Reſur. Serm.* iii.

Ex aliorum factis fieri poſſe credunt, quod forte cum putant fieri non poſſe pigreſcunt. *Cyp. Ep.* l. ii. 2.

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SERM. V. *of them, who through faith and patience inherit the promiſes.* For that heat, and active ſpirit, which in ſome degree reſideth in all men's breaſts, is by example kindled, as one flame is kindled by the contact or approach of another. How many perſons, timorous and averſe from dangerous undertakings, have notwithſtanding become very bold and adventurous in war, by the diſcipline and influence of an exemplary valour! It is Plutarch's obſervation concerning Cæſar's ſoldiers, that they who in ſervice under other commanders did not exceed the ordinary rate of courage, nor excel their fellows, did yet when he led them become irreſiſtibly valiant, being animated and inſpired by his unparalleled gallantry [g]: and who is there indeed ſo incurably heartleſs, ſo deſperately ſluggiſh or ſtupid, whom the ſight of a valiant leader marching before into the mouth of danger, will not infuſe fire and vigour into, and inſtigate forward into a participation of brave adventure? So example doth by a kind of contagion inſinuate courage, or inveigle men thereinto; beſide that it is a kind of daring, and proclaimeth him a daſtard, that will not imitate it; which imputation the loweſt courage of man can hardly digeſt, and will therefore by doing ſomewhat anſwerable ſtrive to decline it.

3. [h] Again: Examples provoke emulation; which is another ſtrong principle of activity; moving us earneſtly to deſire (and thence eagerly to purſue) whatever good, privilege, or advantage, we ſee another to enjoy. To obſerve another of the ſame nature and capacities with ourſelves to have ſhone with an illuſtrious virtue, to be conſecrated to poſterity by a *laſting* fame, and to be crowned with glorious rewards above; what other reflections of thought can it produce in us, than

[g] ——Fortis in armis
Cæſareis Labienus erat.

[h] *Chryſ.* T. 1. p. 77. T. 6. p. 148. T. 5. *Orat.* 101.
Φύσει γὰρ φιλόκαλοι ἐσμεν τὴν φύσιν τῶν ἀνθρώπων οἶδεν ὁ Κύριος, &c.

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ſuch as theſe? Shall he, a man like myſelf, endued with the ſame faculties, appetites, and paſſions; ſubject to the ſame infirmities, temptations, needs, cares, and encumbrances of life; ſhall he, by noble diſpoſitions of ſoul, and worthy performances, render himſelf highly conſiderable; while I, by ſordid qualities and unworthy practices, debaſe and render myſelf deſpicable? Shall he leave behind him monuments of eternal praiſe, while I do nothing worthy of regard or memory? Shall he enjoy the favour of the great God, and the comforts of a bleſſed eternity, but I be wholly deprived of that joyful eſtate, and plunged into endleſs ſorrows, and deſperate miſery? Shall a Joſeph ſtoutly reſiſt and overcome the ſtrongeſt temptations, and I be eaſily baffled by the leaſt ſolicitation of vice? Shall a ſtripling David gloriouſly triumph over giants, while I baſely am vanquiſhed by dwarfs? Shall Job be ſtripped of all his goods with contentedneſs, and endure the moſt grievous pains with patience, while I am diſcompoſed for any ſmall loſs, and diſmayed by the leaſt croſs accident? Shall Abraham here, by his faith and obedience, attain to be called the friend of God, and reſt for ever in his glorious and happy boſom, while I deſervedly am refuſed the honour and comfort of that heavenly communion here, and ſhall hereafter be caſt out from that bliſsful preſence, into the diſmal manſions of wretched folly and wickedneſs? Did Paul, once a ſtubborn Jew, a blind phariſee, a grievous blaſphemer, a bloody perſecutor, by a ſeaſonable converſion repair his ſtate, approve himſelf to God by an eminent zeal for his glory, undergo reſtleſs pains, run deſperate hazards, and endure all ſorts of diſtreſſes for the propagation of God's heavenly truth, obtaining thence a never-fading crown of glory in heaven, and a perpetual renown upon earth; and ſhall I then, who from my youth have been educated in the moſt true and holy religion, who have by ſolemn engagements devoted myſelf thereto, who may without any trouble or danger profeſs and practiſe according to that holy diſcipline, proceed in

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SERM. V. in wicked courſes, provoking God's wrath, and attracting his vengeance upon me? No: ſince the capacities are alike, ſince the means are common, ſince the rewards of piety are promiſcuouſly expoſed and offered unto all, why ſhould I, by deplorable perverſeneſs or negligence, ſuffer myſelf to be deprived of it and its benefits? Why ſhall not I become as good, as commendable, as happy as any other man? Theſe are the conceits and voices of natural emulation, that mighty paſſion (ſo often and by many effects it diſcovereth itſelf to be) implanted in our original conſtitution to be as a ſpur and incentive, ſtimulating and inflaming us unto the ready undertaking and vigorous purſuit of good purpoſes; the which perhaps hath produced more noble effects than any other paſſion or inclination of our ſouls: for all manner of excellency in knowledge, in proweſs, in virtue, how often doth it iſſue from this ſource! Doth not the admired fame of men notable for learning (recorded in ſtory, or ſubject to preſent obſervation,) and a jealouſy of being ſurpaſſed in accompliſhments competent to human nature, ſharpen the appetite, and rouſe the induſtry of moſt ſcholars, whom neither the love of knowledge, nor its apparent uſefulneſs could any wiſe perſuade to bear ſo much toil in acquiſt thereof [1]? Do not all hiſtories acquaint us, that the moſt gallant enterpriſes and exploits of famous warriors have derived their beginning from an emulation of the glory purchaſed by their anceſtors? (wiſdom and valour have thus eſpecially been propagated; one man's ſignal excellency being parent to the like in many others.) And that this paſſion may in like manner be ſubſervient to the production of virtue and piety, is plain enough from parity of reaſon, and from experience; and we have (for farther argument thereof) the Apoſtles' practice uſing it to this purpoſe: St. Paul employed it as an engine for the

[1] Tentanda via eſt, qua me quoque poſſim
Tollere humo.——

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converſion of his dear countrymen; whom, by raiſing in them a jealouſy of being outſtripped (in God's favour, and its effects) by the Gentiles, he endeavoureth to provoke to the embracing of the Chriſtian faith: *I ſpeak to you Gentiles*, ſaith he, *in as much as I am the Apoſtle of the Gentiles, I magnify my office, εἴπως παραζηλώσω μου τὴν σάρκα, if by any means I may provoke to emulation them which are my fleſh, and might ſave ſome of them.* And St. James inſtigateth us unto fervency of prayer, by minding us, that *Elias was a man of like paſſions with ourſelves*; yet was able by his prayers to ſhut and open heaven, to procure barrenneſs and fertility to the earth. And the Apoſtle to the Hebrews chargeth us, to *conſider one another, εἰς παροξυσμὸν ἀγάπης, καὶ καλῶν ἔργων, ſo as to provoke one another* (or by mutual emulation to ſharpen one another) *to charity and good works.*

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Rom. xi. 13, 14. x. 19.

Jam. v. 17.

4. Examples do work upon modeſty, *that preſerver and guardian of virtue*, as Cicero calls it [i]. For every good action of another doth upbraid, reproach, and ſhame him, who acteth not conformably thereto. Can we without a trembling heart, and bluſhing forehead, view the practices of the ancient ſaints, if ours be altogether unlike them? If they, to pleaſe God, and ſecure their ſalvation, did undergo ſuch *prodigious* pains in aſſiduous devotions, abſtinences, watchings, and we contrariwiſe are extremely ſluggiſh, cold, and negligent in the performance of our ordinary duties; if they willingly renounced all ſenſual complacencies, and we either cheriſh ourſelves in a ſoft delicacy of life, or wallow in a profane diſſolution of manners; if they, to free themſelves from diſtracting cares, voluntarily diſburthened themſelves of all needleſs encumbrances, and we are wholly buſy in *heaping up* wealth, and driving on worldly inter-

[i] Cuſtos omnium virtutum, dedecus fugiens, laudemque maxime conſequens verecundia eſt. *Cic. Part. Rhet.*

eſts;

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SERM. V. eſts; if they gladly embraced and endured the ſharpeſt afflictions, and we are terrified by the thought, are overwhelmed by the ſenſe of the leaſt diſappointment, or diſtaſteful occurrence; how can we without extreme regret of mind, and confuſion of face, conſider their practice, or compare it with ours? It is a profligate impudence of him that can daily hear and read the ſtories of their doings, without being deeply ſenſible, and aſhamed at the diſſonance appearing between their courſe of life and his.

5. Example awakens that curioſity, which is natural to us, and of no mean efficacy upon our actions. For whatever we ſee done, we are apt to be inquiſitive concerning it; why and to what purpoſe it is done, what the grounds are, and what the fruits of the performance; eſpecially if the matter ſeem conſiderably important, and the action proceedeth from a perſon deſerving reſpect; whereof having paſſed ſome competent judgment, we are by the ſame inſtinct of curioſity farther tranſported into a deſire of diſcerning by our trial and experience whether the event correſpondeth to our expectation; ſo are we eaſily induced to imitate the actions of others. By which means as vice ordinarily is conceived and propagated, (men by a prepoſterous and perverſe curioſity being inveigled to try what they ſee others affect or enjoy) ſo may virtue alſo by the ſame means be engendered and nouriſhed; the general ways of producing and maintaining thoſe contrary habits being alike. As, therefore, it is a great blemiſh and reproach to human nature that,

Juven. ——Faciles imitandis
Turpibus et pravis omnes ſumus—

we (as the Satyriſt truly obſerveth of us) *have a great proclivity to follow naughty examples*; ſo there is from hence ſome amends, that we have alſo ſome inclination to imitate good and worthy precedents; the which

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which is ſomewhat more ſtrong and vigorous, becauſe countenanced and encouraged by the approbation of reaſon, our moſt noble faculty. SERM. V.

6. Examples alſo do pleaſe the mind and fancy in contemplation of them, thence drawing a conſiderable influence upon practice. No kind of ſtudious entertainment doth ſo generally delight as hiſtory, or the tradition of remarkable examples: even thoſe who have an abhorrency or indiſpoſition toward other ſtudies (who have no genius to apprehend the more intricate ſubtleties of ſcience, nor the patience to purſue rational conſequences,) are yet often much taken with hiſtorical narrations; theſe ſtriking them with a delectable variety of accidents, with circumſtantial deſcriptions, and ſenſible repreſentations of objects, do greatly affect and delight their fancies; eſpecially the relation of notable adventures and rare accidents is wont to be attended with great pleaſure and ſatisfaction. And ſuch are thoſe, which preſent to us the lives and examples of holy men abounding with wonders of providence and grace: no attempts ſo gallant, no exploits ſo illuſtrious, as thoſe, which have been achieved by the faith and patience, by the prudence and courage of the ancient ſaints; they do far ſurpaſs the moſt famous achievements of pagan heroes. It was, I dare ſay, more wonderful, that Abraham with his retinue of houſehold ſervants ſhould vanquiſh four potent and victorious kings; and that Gideon with three hundred unarmed men ſhould diſcomfit a vaſtly numerous hoſt, than that Alexander with a well-appointed army of ſtout and expert ſoldiers ſhould overturn the Perſian empire. The ſiege of Jericho is ſo far more remarkable than thoſe moſt famous ones of Numantia and Saguntus, as it is more ſtrange that the blaſt of trumpets and the noiſe of people ſhouting ſhould demoliſh walls, than the ſhaking them with rams, or diſcharging maſſy ſtones againſt them. And he, that carefully will compare the deeds of Sampſon and Hercules, ſhall find, that one

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SERM. V. one true exploit performed by the former doth much in force and ſtrangeneſs ſurmount the twelve fabulous labours of the other: no triumphs indeed are comparable to thoſe of piety; no trophies are ſo magnificent and durable, as thoſe which victorious faith erecteth: that hiſtory therefore which reports the *res geſtæ*, the acts and ſufferings of moſt pious men, muſt in reaſon be eſteemed not only the moſt uſeful, but alſo the moſt pleaſant; yielding the ſweeteſt entertainment to well diſpoſed minds; wherein we ſee virtue expreſſed, not in bare *idea* only, but in actual life, ſtrength, motion; in all its beauty and ornaments: than which no ſpectacle can be more ſtately; no object more grateful can be preſented to the diſcerning eye of reaſon.

7. We may farthermore conſider, that God hath provided and recommended to us one example, as a perfect ſtandard of good practice; the example of our Lord: the which declareth the uſe and efficacy of good example, as one principal inſtrument of piety. That indeed is the moſt univerſal, abſolute, and aſſured pattern; yet doth it not ſuperſede the uſe of other examples: not only the valour and conduct of the general, but thoſe of inferior officers, yea, the reſolution of common ſoldiers do ſerve to animate their fellows. The ſtars have their ſeaſon to guide us, as well as the ſun; eſpecially when our eyes are ſo weak, as hardly to bear the day. Even, conſidering our infirmity, inferior examples by their imperfection ſometime have a peculiar advantage. Our Lord's moſt imitable practice did proceed from an immenſe virtue of divine grace, which we cannot arrive to; it in itſelf is ſo perfect and high, that we may not ever reach it; looking upon it may therefore ſometimes dazzle and diſcourage our weakneſs: but other good men had aſſiſtances in meaſure, ſuch as we may hope to approach unto; they were ſubject to the difficulties, which we feel; they were expoſed to the perils of falling, which we fear: we may therefore hope to

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to march on in a reaſonable diſtance after them; we may, by help of the ſame grace, come near in tranſcribing their leſs exact copy. SERM. V.

To conclude: Since upon ſo many accounts we are obliged to follow good examples; ſince they are of ſo great uſe toward our proceeding in the way to happineſs; thence they conduce to the clear inſtruction of our underſtanding, to the forcibly inclining our reaſon, to the vehement excitement of our paſſions, to the delightfully affecting our imagination in ſubſerviency to good practice; let us make that due and profitable uſe of them, which we ſhould and may do. Let us, with diligent attention peruſing the ſacred hiſtory, meditate upon the lives of holy men therein propounded as patterns of a perſevering faith in God, and conſcionable obedience to his commandments. Let the light of their exemplary practice in all kind of piety and virtue continually ſhine upon our ſouls, to direct our minds, to inflame our affections, to quicken our reſolutions, to detect the errors and correct the faults of our lives, that we, imitating their virtuous and pious converſation, may partake of thoſe comfortable rewards, of that joy, and bliſs, whereof they reſt poſſeſſed. The which God Almighty, and our bleſſed Saviour, the author and finiſher of our faith, by his gracious aid and bleſſing grant unto us; to whom be all glory and praiſe for ever and ever. *Amen.*

SERMON

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SERMON VI.

Abiding in Chriſt to be demonſtrated by walking as Chriſt did.

1 JOHN ii. 6.

He that ſaith he abideth in him, ought himſelf alſo ſo to walk as he walked.

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TO *abide in Chriſt*; to *be in Chriſt*; to *put on Chriſt*; and reciprocally *Chriſt's being in us*, *living*, *dwelling*, *being formed in us*; and the like expreſſions occurring in holy Scripture, do not denote any phyſical inherence, or eſſential conjunction between Chriſt and us, (ſuch as thoſe who affect unintelligible myſteries rather than plain ſenſe would conceit,) but only that mutual relation accruing from our profeſſion of being Chriſt's diſciples, our being inſerted into his body the Church, being governed by his laws, partaking of his grace, with all the privileges of the Goſpel, relying upon his promiſes, and hoping for eternal ſalvation from him. By virtue of which relation, we may be ſaid, in a myſtical or moral manner, to be united to him, deriving ſtrength and ſuſtenance from him, as the members from the head, the branches from the tree, the other parts of the building from the foundation; by which ſimilitudes this myſterious union is uſually expreſſed in Scripture: in effect, briefly,

Rom. viii. 10. Gal. ii. 20. Eph. iii. 17. Gal. iv. 19.

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SERM. VI. briefly, to be in, or to abide in Christ, implieth no more, but our being truly in faith and practice Christians; so that the meaning of St. John's words seemeth plainly and simply to be this: Whoever pretends to be a Christian, (that is, to believe the doctrine and embrace the discipline of Christ,) ought to walk (that is, is obliged to order the whole course of his life and actions) as Christ walked, (that is, as Christ did live and converse in the world:) or, it is the duty of every one, professing Christianity, to conform his life to the pattern of Christ's life, to follow his example, to imitate his practice. This is the importance of the words, this the subject of our present discourse.

I. For illustration and confirmation of which point, we may observe, that the holy Apostles do upon all occasions assume this supposition, when they would persuade their disciples to the practice of any virtue, or performance of any duty; enforcing their exhortations, by representing the practice of Christ, as an unquestionable ground of obligation, and an effectual inducement thereto. Hence they incite them

1 Pet. i. 15. to holiness: *But*, saith St. Peter, *as he that hath called you is holy, so be ye holy in all manner of conversation:* to charity; *And walk in love*, saith St. Paul, *as Christ also loved us:* to patience; *Because*, saith

1 Pet. ii. 21. St. Peter, *Christ also suffered for us, leaving us an ex-*

Heb. xii. 1, 2. *ample, that we should follow his steps.* And, *Let us*, saith the Apostle to the Hebrews, *run with patience the race that is set before us, looking unto Jesus, the author and finisher of our faith, who for the joy that was*

Phil. ii. 5, 6, 7. *set before him endured the cross:* to humility; *Let*, saith St. Paul, *the same mind be in you, which was also in Christ Jesus, who, being in the form of God, thought it not robbery to be equal with God, but made himself of no reputation:* to charitable compliance, and inoffensive demeanour toward others, intimated by St. Paul, when he says,

1 Cor. x. 33. xi. 1. *Even as I please all men in all things, not seeking my own profit, but the profit of many, that they might be saved;*

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Be ye followers of me, as I am of Christ: and again, *Let* SERM. *every one please his neighbour for his good to edification;* VI. *for even Christ pleased not himself.* Thus do the Apostles take all occasion, from the like practice of Christ, to persuade the performance of duty; and the strength of their argument lieth upon the evidence of this supposition, that all professing themselves Christians are especially obliged to imitate Christ's example. And their authority may be backed and enforced by several reasons. Rom. xv. 2, 3.

II. Doing so hath a reasonableness and decency grounded upon our relations to Christ: it is fit and comely that the manners of the disciple should be regulated by those of his master; that the servant should not, in his garb and demeanour, dissent or vary from his lord; that the subject should conform his humour to the fashion of his prince; especially that we should thus comply and conform to such a master, such a lord, such a prince, whom (upon highest considerations) by a most voluntary choice, and in a most solemn manner, we have absolutely devoted ourselves unto: this reason our Lord himself doth urge: *Ye,* saith he to his disciples, *call me Master, and Lord; and ye say well, for so I am: if I then, your Lord and Master, have washed your feet, ye also ought to wash one another's feet.* John. xiii. 13, 14.

III. Following Christ's example is requisite to demonstrate the sincerity of our faith, love, and reverence to him. It is the most natural way of testifying affection and respect, to imitate the manners of those persons, who are the objects of those acts and dispositions, to esteem what they approve, to delight in what they affect, and consequently (since actions do proceed from affections) to do as they do. Contrary actions are plain arguments of contrary judgments, inclinations, and affections. Who can imagine we sincerely believe in Christ, or heartily love him, or truly honour him, that seeth us to loathe what he liked, or affect what he detested; to contemn what he prized, or value what he despised; to neglect what he pursued,

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SERM. VI. sued, or embrace what he avoided? But if our lives resemble his, any man will thence collect our respect and affection to him: this argument our Saviour doth also intimate: *By this*, saith he, *shall all men know ye are my disciples, if ye love one another*; that is, it will be an evident sign and strong argument, that ye really do believe in, love, and honour me, if ye imitate me in my charity.

John. xiii. 35.

IV. By pretending to be Christians we acknowledge the transcendent goodness, worth, and excellency of our Saviour; that he was incomparably better and wiser than any person ever was, or could be; that he always acted with the highest reason, out of the most excellent disposition of mind, in order to the best purposes; and that his practice therefore reasonably should be the rule and pattern of ours. For the best and exactest in every kind is the measure of the rest. All that would obtain exquisite skill in any art, or faculty, think best to imitate the works of the best masters therein; a painter to draw after the pieces of Zeuxis or Apelles (of Raphael, or Titian;) an orator to speak in the style of Cicero, or Demosthenes; a soldier to emulate the military achievements of Hannibal, or Cæsar: in like manner, reason requireth, if we would live well and happily, that we should endeavour to conform our practice to that of our Saviour, the most perfect mirror of all virtue and goodness.

V. The practice of our Saviour did thoroughly agree with his doctrine and law; he required nothing of us, which he did not eminently perform himself. He *fulfilled* in deed, as well as taught in word, *all righteousness*. He was not *ignava opera, philosopha sententia*; like those masters of philosophy, so frequently taxed and derided by the Satyrists; who, by a horrid garb, supercilious looks, and loud declamations, would seem to discountenance those vices which themselves practised [k]; nor like those hypocritical lawyers

[k] Οὐδὲν ψυχρότερον τοῦ καλὰ λόγους φιλοσοφοῦντος. *Chrys.*
Ὢν τὸ σῶμα τῷ τρόπῳ καθήγορον. *Naz.*

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in the Goſpel, who laded other men with *heavy burthens*, ſuch as themſelves would *not touch with one of their fingers:* no, he impoſed nothing on us, which he did not firſt bear upon his own ſhoulders: the ſtrictneſs of his life did, in all reſpects, correſpond with the ſeverity of his precepts, or rather did indeed much exceed them. They therefore who pretend to believe his doctrine, and avow themſelves bound to obſerve his law, are conſequently engaged to follow his practice, in which his doctrine and law are ſignally exemplified. SERM. VI. Luc. xi. 46.

VI. It being the deſign of divine goodneſs, in ſending our Saviour, to render us good and happy, to deliver us from ſin and miſery, to inſtruct us in the knowledge, and excite us to the practice of all virtue, and thereby to qualify us for the enjoyment of a bleſſed immortality; effecting all this in a way agreeable to our natural condition and capacity; there could not be deviſed any more powerful means, or more convenient method, of accompliſhing thoſe excellent purpoſes, than by propounding ſuch an example, and obliging us to comply therewith: the which may appear, 1. by conſidering in general the advantage and efficacy that good example is apt to have upon practice; 2. by weighing the peculiar excellency of our Saviour's example above all others, in order to thoſe ends; and 3. by ſurveying the particular inſtances of imitable goodneſs repreſented in the life of our Saviour.

1. Good example is naturally an effectual inſtrument of good practice; for that it doth moſt compendiouſly, pleaſantly, and eaſily inſtruct; repreſenting things to be done at one view, in a full body, clothed with all their modes and circumſtances; it recommends them to us, by the moſt plain and plauſible way of reaſoning, (and withal the moſt ſure and ſafe) the authority of wiſe and good men; it encourageth, by evidently declaring the practicableneſs of rules preſcribed; it kindleth and rouſeth men's cou-

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SERM. VI. rage, by a kind of contagion, as one flame doth kindle another; it raiſeth a worthy emulation of doing laudable things, which we ſee done; or of obtaining a ſhare in the commendations and rewards of virtue. It urgeth modeſty, breeding ſhame and regret in them who act contrarily thereto; it awakeneth curioſity, thereby producing a deſire to make trial of what it propoſeth; it affecteth and pleaſeth the fancy, thereby inſinuating an approbation, admiration, and liking of the good things, which it repreſenteth: briefly, it exciteth and engageth all our paſſions, ſetting on work all thoſe powerful ſprings of activity, it conſequently is, in its own nature, an efficacious mean of good practice. This we may in general ſay of all good examples; but,

2. More eſpecially the example of Chriſt doth, in efficacy and influence upon good practice, ſurpaſs all others; upon ſeveral accounts.

Firſt, In that it is a ſure and infallible rule, an entire and perfect rule of practice; deficient in no part, ſwerving in no circumſtance from truth and right, which privileges are competent to no other example. The practice of the beſt men is not always to be imitated, nor ever abſolutely as a certain ground of action; it is to be (ſo far as we have ability) conſidered, examined, and compared to more certain rules, (the divine laws, and the principles of right reaſon,) according to their agreement with which they are to be followed: they are indeed (before trial of the caſe) probable arguments of what is done by them being good and lawful; they do outweigh ſlender and obſcure reaſonings about the goodneſs of things; they may, when opportunity, leiſure, or ability of farther enquiry and judgment about things are wanting, ſerve to direct us; but they are not throughly ſure rules, or perfect meaſures of our duty. We ſhould beware leſt we be ſeduced even by holy perſons; and therefore with circumſpection and caution ſhould peruſe their ſtory, and contemplate their demeanour; whereof

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whereof those which are explicitly commended, or SERM. allowed by the divine judgment, we may, being as- VI. sured that we are in the same circumstances, safely follow, (taking them for monitories, encouragements, and excitements to our duty:) but those that are directly condemned by the same sentence, or apparently devious from God's law, we as carefully should avoid; [1] such as are of a doubtful and unaccountable nature we are to suspend about, and not to ground upon; nor to argue from the fact to the rightfulness of them; the safest way being always (as we are able) to have recourse to the simple, plain, and perspicuous precepts of God, and dictates of reason. For the best men have been always subject to errors and infirmities; the fountain of original corruption in them was never so dried up, or closely stopped, but that some impure streams have bubbled forth; the fire of natural concupiscence was never so utterly quenched, but that sometimes it would blaze, or smoke out in bad actions; that intestine enemy, the flesh, was never throughly subdued, nor the body of sin quite slain and mortified in any other mortal man. Good men have ever had some foul spots, or deforming wrinkles, appearing in the beauteous face of their conversation; they have had their inequalities and indispositions of humour, their ebbs of devotion, their fits of sloth, their wanton freaks, their slips often, and sometimes their falls; they have been subject to be deluded by mistake, to be surprised by inadvertency, to be transported by passion, to be swayed by temper, to be biassed by interest, to be allured by temptation into false and unwarrantable proceedings; they might sometime fail in the substance, oftener in the degree, in the manner, in the circumstances of action: we find them often complaining of their proneness to do

[1] It was ill said of Seneca: Catoni ebrietas objecta est, et facilius efficiet, quisquis objecerit hoc crimen, honestum, quam turpem Catonem.

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SERM. VI. amiss, bemoaning the wretched frailty of their state; yea, often repenting and bitterly mourning for their actual transgressions: there hardly is any saint, recorded in Scripture, without some blemish in his actions; which shews our weakness, and engageth us to be wary. They were indeed endowed with sufficient competences of divine light, and graces suitable to their private needs, or to the public exigences of their times, places, occasions, and affairs; but not with the perfection and extreme degrees thereof, requisite to preserve them from all miscarriage; so that we are not always, or in all cases, to conform our actions to their examples: we must not learn to equivocate of Abraham, nor to circumvent of Jacob, nor to be choleric of Moses, (so as in our excess of passion to break the tables of the divine law,) nor of Eli to be fondly affectionate or indulgent to our relations; nor of David to utter uncharitable imprecations; nor to dissemble of St. Peter; nor of St. Paul to revile magistrates. The use we are to make of many practices of most eminently pious men, is not to be misguided by them into wrong paths; not by them to authorize or excuse our presumptuous misdeeds; but to make us to admire and to rely upon the Divine mercy, which so graciously did overlook and pardon their offences; to provoke us to an imitation of their repentance; to render us watchful in shunning those rocks, upon which persons so skilful in the conduct of their lives have dashed; to engage us to humility, by considering so manifest arguments of our frailty, and our being obnoxious to greater and more frequent miscarriages.

But as to our Saviour's example, the case is quite different; for though he did miracles as God, he commanded as Christ; he did many heroical things in discharge of his office, &c. in which things we cannot, or may not, imitate him: yet, whatever in his life was in its own nature imitable by us, which did not exceed our natural powers, nor disagree with our

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our condition and quality; whatever he as man, in a private capacity, as ſubject to the divine law, with regard thereto, performed, we may with all freedom, confidence, and ſecurity, imitate. Nor can ſo doing incur any danger of error or guilt; for we cannot, without great folly and impiety, ſuſpect any fault or imperfection in his moſt pure, righteous, and innocent life: he was *holy, harmleſs, undefiled, and ſeparated from ſinners:* he was *a lamb without blemiſh and without ſpot; he was in all points tempted as we are, yet without ſin. He did no ſin, nor was any guile found in his mouth. God gave him of his ſpirit not by meaſure.* Theſe are the voices and elogies of the ſacred Oracles concerning him. The heavenly extraction even of his humanity derived no original contagion from our polluted ſtock, and rendered him free from the common incentives of evil concupiſcence. The inſeparable preſence of the Divinity with him (*for God was with him*, as St. Peter expreſſed it) and the unreſtrained effuſion of the Holy Spirit upon him, did preſerve him from all defilements of infectious converſation in this world; a clear evidence of divine light always ſhining in his ſoul, directed him infallibly in the paths of truth and righteouſneſs: no tempeſt of croſs accidents without, nor any eſtuations of internal paſſion, could diſcompoſe the ſteady calm and ſerenity of his mind; no allurement of worldly pleaſure, nor temptation of profit, could pervert his practice, or ſeduce his heart; being inflamed with moſt intenſe love of God, and entire charity to men: ſo that his example muſt needs be a perfect rule and ſure direction to us. Which conſideration cannot but yield great encouragement and comfort in following him; freeing us from all anxious doubt and ſuſpicion of miſtake in our ſpiritual progreſs; like the preſence of a ſure guide to the bewildered traveller; like the appearance of a ſtar to the weather-beaten mariner; like that miraculous pillar of fire, which ſafely conducted the wandering Iſraelites through

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Heb. vii. 26. 1 Pet. i. 19. Heb. iv. 15. 1 Pet. ii. 22. Joh. iii. 34. Acts x. 38.

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SERM. VI. through the unknown and unfrequented passages of a wild desart. But farther,

Secondly, The peculiar excellency of our Lord's example appears, in that he was, by the divine Providence, to this very purpose designed, and sent into the world, as well by his practice as by his doctrine, to be the guide and master of holy life and obedience to all men; and did accordingly propound to himself this end of his actions, that he might be imitated by his disciples. So he declareth himself, as to some considerable passages of his life; and thence, by reasonable inference, we may suppose the same of the rest, so far as they might be conducible to the same end; especially, since of some performances, no other, or no so probable account can be given, as that they were done for exemplarity: for why should he fast, who had no sins to be repented of, no rebellious flesh to be tamed, no intemperate desires to be mortified, no coldness of devotion to be enlivened thereby[a]? And why did he offer himself to be baptized, who had no original stain to be cleansed of, no fault to be forgiven, no want of special grace to be conferred? Why, but, by his exemplary fulfilling all righteousness, to teach us ready obedience to all divine institutions, and peaceable compliance with all laudable customs? So an ancient writer wisely descanteth upon those practices of our Saviour: *He was*, saith that writer, *baptized, and fasted, not because he had need of any cleansing, or fasting, who in nature was pure and holy; but that he might attest to the truth of St. John, and might exhibit a pattern to us*[b]: What induced him to condescend to such a misbeseeming employment to appearance, as the washing of his disciples' feet,

[a] Διὰ τοῦτο καὶ αὐτὸς ἐνήστευσεν, οὐκ αὐτὸς ταύτης δεόμενος, ἀλλ' ἡμᾶς παιδεύων. *Chrys.* tom. ii. p. 81.

[b] Ἐβαπτίσθη καὶ ἐνήστευσεν οὐκ αὐτὸς ἀπορυπώσεως ἢ νηστείας χρείαν ἔχων, ἢ καθάρσεως, ὁ τῇ φύσει καθαρὸς καὶ ἅγιος, ἀλλ' ἵνα Ἰωάννῃ ἀληθεύσας πρεσμαρτυρήσῃ, καὶ ἡμῖν ὑπογραμμὸν παράσχηται.

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he doth himſelf tell us: *If I then*, ſaith he, *your Lord* SERM. VI.
and Maſter, have waſhed your feet, ye ought alſo to waſh one another's feet; for I have given you an example, that ye ſhould do as I have done unto you. This was his profeſſed ſcope and drift, in that admirable deportment of his, to teach us humility, charity, and condeſcenſion toward the meaneſt of our brethren. What did thoſe exuberant inſtances of charity, practiſed by him, import? This eſpecially, that we ſhould imitate them: hither he drives them; *This*, ſaith he, John xv. 12.
is my commandment, that ye love one another, as I have loved you. Why was he in his diſpoſition ſo meek and gentle, in his converſation ſo humble and lowly? To this purpoſe, that we might of him learn thoſe excellent qualities: *Learn of me*, ſaith he, *for* Mat. xi. 29.
I am meek and lowly in heart. And St. Peter ſaith, *That Chriſt ſuffered for us, leaving us an example, that* 1 Pet. ii. 21.
we ſhould follow his ſteps; ſignifying, that he deſigned his patience to be exemplary to us. If then our Saviour, in his humility, his charity, his meekneſs, his patience, intended his life to be exemplary, and expreſsly propounded it as ſuch; then certainly, in his devotion, his ſelf-denial, his juſtice, in all other virtues, he had the ſame intention; and what he intended, God deſigned to be; and what God deſigned to be, was doubtleſs eminently conducible to the end deſigned; and therefore our Saviour's life was moſt exemplary. Other ſaints indeed were of very exemplary converſation; but either proved to be ſo, according to ordinary courſe of Providence, without any peculiar deſignation thereto, (their free choice conſpiring with God's grace in producing good works ſhining before men,) or at moſt, by a reſtrained determination to ſome particular time, place, or people; as Moſes was choſen and appointed to conduct the Iſraelites; *David was taken from the ſheep-fold, and following the ewes great with young, to feed Jacob God's people, and Iſrael his inheritance*; Jeremy was ſanctified from his birth, and ordained to be a prophet

Acts vii. 25. Pſal. cvi. 23. Pſ. lxxviii. 70, 71. Jer. i. 5.

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SERM. VI. prophet of the nations in his times; and St. Paul was separated from the womb to be a preacher of the Christian faith: these, and such like eminent persons, Almighty God, in his goodness, was pleased to raise up, to be, in their generations, as it were, partial and temporary Saviours, as by declaring his will, and revealing his truth to men, so by guiding them with a remarkable example: these *burning and shining lamps* (as St. John the Baptist is called) were indeed like lamps set up in some particular families, with a competent lustre, to dispel the present darkness, shining within their definite sphere, and for a determinate time: but our Saviour, like the sun, fixed in a higher orb, was ordained with a perpetual and unconfined splendour to illuminate the universe, to cause a general and everlasting day of healthful and comfortable knowledge over the face of the whole earth. He was *that true light, which enlighteneth every man coming into the world*; *He was prepared before the face of all people, to be a light to lighten the nations*; (not Israel only, but the *nations* indefinitely, or all nations.) He was ordained, not commander of a single regiment, or party, but captain-general of all mankind, to conduct all those who were disposed to follow him, by a victorious obedience, into that triumphant state of everlasting joy and happiness. His example doth belong unto us all, without exception, by Divine ordination; for *we*, all of us, *were* (to use St. Paul's expression) *predestinated to be conformed to the image of God's Son*; *that he might be the first-born among many brethren.* So it was, and so it became the infinite goodness and philanthropy of God, to bestow upon mankind one perfectly good example, inviting to all virtue, and so fit to countervail all those many bad ones, wherewith we converse, enticing to vice; to set forth, among so many imperfect ones, one accomplished piece of his heavenly workmanship, able to attract the eyes and ravish the hearts of all men with admiration of its excellent worth

Joh. v. 35. Λύχνος ὁ καιόμενος καὶ φαίνων.

John i. 9.

Luc. ii. 31, 32.

Heb. ii. 10.

Rom. viii. 29.

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worth and beauty; to offer to our view some dis- SERM.
cernible representation of his invisible perfections; VI.
that so we might better be induced and inured to
apprehend, love, reverence, and imitate himself, by contemplation of that most exquisite image of him; to give an evident proof that the highest virtue is not unpracticable, that human nature, by aid and guidance of the Divine Spirit, may arrive to the sublimest pitch of perfection in goodness; in fine, to expose such a common, sweet, and lovely pattern, as we with assurance, joy, and comfort may follow.

Joh. v. 19. Ἃ γὰρ ἂν ἐκεῖνος ποιῇ, ταῦτα καὶ ὁ υἱὸς ὁμοίως ποιεῖ.

Thirdly, Our Saviour's example is especially influential upon practice, in that it was, by an admirable temperament, more accommodated for imitation than any others have been; that the perfect copy of his most holy life seems more easy to be transcribed, than the ruder draughts of other holy men: for though it were written with an incomparable fairness, delicacy, and evenness; not slurred with any foul blot, nor any where declining from exact straightness; yet were the lineaments thereof exceeding plain and simple; not by any gaudy flourishes, or impertinent intrigues, rendered difficult to studious imitation; so that even women and children, the weakest and meanest sort of people, as well as the most wise and ingenious, might easily perceive its design, and with good success write after it. His was a gentle and steady light, bright indeed, but not dazzling the eye; warm, but not scorching the face of the most intent beholder; no affected singularities, no supercilious morosities, no frivolous ostentations of seemingly high, but really fruitless performances; nothing that might deter a timorous, discourage a weak, or offend a scrupulous disciple, is observable in his practice: but, on the contrary, his conversation was full of lowliness and condescension, of meekness and sweetness, of openness and candid simplicity; apt to invite and allure all men to approach toward it, and with satisfaction to enjoy it.

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SERM. VI. He did not ſeclude himſelf into the conſtant retirements of a cloiſter, nor into the farther receſſes of a wilderneſs, (as ſome others have done) but converſed freely and indifferently with all ſorts of men, even the moſt contemptible and odious ſort of men, *publicans* and *ſinners*; like the ſun, with an impartial bounty, liberally imparting his pleaſant light and comfortable warmth to all. He uſed no uncouth auſterities in habit, or diet; but complied, in his garb, with ordinary uſage, and ſuſtained his life with ſuch food as caſual opportunity did offer; ſo that his indifferency in that kind yielded matter of obloquy againſt him from the fond admirers of a humorous preciſeneſs. His devotions (though exceedingly ſprightful and fervent) were not uſually extended to a tedious and exhauſting durance, nor ſtrained into ecſtatical tranſports, charming the natural ſenſes, and overpowering the reaſon; but calm, ſteady, and regular, ſuch as perſons of honeſt intention and hearty deſire (though not endued with high fancy, or ſtirring paſſion) might readily imitate. His zeal was not violent or impetuous, except upon very great reaſon, and extraordinary occaſion, when the honour of God, or good of men, was much concerned. He was not rigorous in the obſervance of traditional rites and cuſtoms, (ſuch as were needleſsly burthenſome, or which contained in them more of formal ſhew than of real fruit,) yet behaved himſelf orderly and peaceably, giving due reſpect to the leaſt inſtitution of God, and complying with the innocent cuſtoms of men; thereby pointing out unto us the middle way between peeviſh ſuperſtition and boiſterous faction; which as always the moſt honeſt, ſo commonly is the moſt ſafe and pleaſant way to walk in. He delighted not to diſcourſe of ſublime myſteries, (although his deep wiſdom comprehended all) nor of ſubtile ſpeculations and intricate queſtions, ſuch as might amuſe and perplex, rather than inſtruct and profit his auditors; but uſually did feed his

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his auditors with the moſt common and uſeful truths, and that in the moſt familiar and intelligible language; not diſdaining the uſe of vulgar ſayings, and trivial proverbs, when they beſt ſerved to inſinuate his wholeſome meaning into their minds. His whole life was ſpent in exerciſe of the moſt eaſy and pleaſant, yet moſt neceſſary and ſubſtantial, duties; obedience to God, charity, meekneſs, humility, patience, and the like; the which, that he might practiſe with the greateſt latitude, and with moſt advantage for general imitation, he did not addict himſelf to any particular way of life, but diſentangled himſelf from all worldly care and buſineſs; chooſing to appear in the moſt free, though very mean condition; that he might indifferently inſtruct, by his example, perſons of all callings, degrees, and capacities; eſpecially the moſt, that is, the poor; and might have opportunity, in the face of the world, to practiſe the moſt difficult of neceſſary duties; lowlineſs, contentedneſs, abſtinence from pleaſure, contempt of the world, ſufferance of injuries and reproaches. Thus ſuited and tempered by divine wiſdom was the life of our bleſſed Saviour, that all ſorts of men might be in an equal capacity to follow him, that none might be offended, affrighted, or diſcouraged; but that all might be pleaſed, delighted, enamoured, with the homely majeſty and plain beauty thereof. And in effect ſo it happened, that ordinary people (the weakeſt, but ſincereſt and unprejudiced ſort of men) were greatly taken with, moſt admired and applauded his deportment; many of them readily embracing his doctrine, and devoting themſelves to his diſcipline; while only the proud, envious, covetous, and ambitious *ſcribes* and *lawyers* rejected his excellent doctrine, ſcorned the heavenly ſimplicity and holy integrity of his life. SERM. VI.

Fourthly, The tranſcendent excellency of our Lord's example appeareth, in that it is attended with the greateſt obligations (of gratitude and ingenuity,

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SERM. VI. nuity, of juſtice, of intereſt, of duty,) mightily engaging us to follow it. For it is not the example of an ordinary or inconſiderable perſon, of a ſtranger, of one indifferent, or unrelated to us; but of a glorious prince, of heavenly extraction, (the firſt-born Son of the Almighty God, ſole heir of eternal Majeſty,) of our Lord and Maſter, to whom we are for ever bound by indiſpenſible bands of duty and obedience; of our great Captain, who hath undertaken to ſubdue our enemies, and hath obliged us to follow his conduct, in a holy warfare, againſt them, by moſt ſolemn ſacraments and vows; of our beſt Friend, from whom we have received the greateſt favours and benefits imaginable; of our moſt gracious Saviour, who, for our ſake, hath voluntarily ſuſtained moſt bitter pains, and ſhameful contumelies; having ſacrificed his deareſt heart-blood to redeem us from intolerable ſlaveries, and from extremities of horrible miſery; of him, to whom, in all reſpects, we do owe the higheſt reſpect, love, and obſervance that can be. Now it is the nature and property both of reſpect and love (ſuch as upon ſo many grounds we owe to him) to beget in the perſon reſpecting and loving, an endeavour, anſwerable to the degrees of thoſe diſpoſitions, of conforming to, and reſembling, the qualities and manners of the perſon reſpected, or beloved. We ſee how readily children do comply with the cuſtoms of their parents and tutors; ſervants of their maſters and patrons; ſubjects of their princes and governors, with a ſtudious earneſtneſs compoſing themſelves to expreſs in their carriage, not only their good or their indifferent faſhions and manners, but even their moſt palpable deformities and vices; inſomuch, that a whole family, a city, a nation may be debauched from its ſobriety, or reformed from its diſſoluteneſs, even inſtantly, by the example of one perſon, who, by his place, power, and authority, challengeth extraordinary reverence from men: and much greater influence hath hearty love

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love to transform our manners into an agreement with the manners of him we love: *What a man loves, that he imitateth so much as lies in his power*, saith Hierocles, truly. For love being founded on a good esteem, and a benevolent inclination thence resulting, engageth the affectionate person to admire the qualities of him he affecteth, to observe his deportments, to make the most advantageous construction of what he doeth; to fancy he doeth all things with best reason and discretion; to deem, therefore, that all his actions deserve and require imitation: hence doth love either find, or soon produce, a competent similitude in the parties, (a similitude of mind, of will, of inclination, and affection, an *eadem velle et nolle:*) it doth forcibly attract as to a vicinity of place and converse, so to an agreement of affections and actions; it uniteth the most distant, it reconcileth the most opposite, it turneth the most discordant natures into a sweet consent and harmony of disposition and demeanour. We then having the greatest reason both to honour and love our Saviour, surely his example being duly studied and considered by us, must needs obtain a superlative influence upon our practice, and be very powerful to conform and assimilate it to his.

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Ὁ γὰρ ἀγαπῶν τις καὶ μιμεῖται ὅτου εἶδόν τε. Hier.

These considerations may suffice, to shew the peculiar excellency of our Saviour's example in virtue, and efficacy upon our practice; the same more abundantly might be deduced from a survey of the most considerable particulars, in which we may and ought to imitate him. But the time will not suffer us to launch forth into so vast a sea of discourse. I shall only, therefore, from the premises, exhort, that if any earnest desire of happiness, any high esteem of virtue, any true affection to genuine sanctity do lodge in our breasts, we should apply this most excellent means of attaining them; the study and endeavour of imitating the life of our Lord. If we have in us any truth and sincerity, and do not vainly pre-

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SERM. VI. varicate in our profeſſion of being Chriſt's diſciples, and votaries of that moſt holy inſtitution, let us manifeſt it by a real conformity to the practice of him who is our Maſter, and author of our faith. If we have in us any wiſdom, or ſober conſideration of things, let us employ it in following the ſteps of that infallible guide, deſigned by heaven to lead us in the ſtraight, even, and pleaſant ways of righteouſneſs, unto the poſſeſſion of everlaſting bliſs. If we do verily like and approve the practice of Chriſt, and are affected with the innocent, ſweet, and lovely comelineſs thereof, let us declare ſuch our mind by a ſedulous care to reſemble it. If we bear any honour and reverence, any love and affection to Chriſt; if we are at all ſenſible of our relations, our manifold obligations, our duties to our great Lord, our beſt Friend, our moſt gracious Redeemer; let us teſtify it by a zealous care to become like to him: let a lively image of his moſt righteous and innocent, moſt holy and pious, moſt pure and ſpotleſs life be ever preſent to our fancies; ſo as to inform our judgments, to excite our affections, to quicken our endeavours, to regulate our purpoſes, to correct our miſtakes, to direct, amend, and ſanctify our whole lives. Let us, with inceſſant diligence of ſtudy, meditate upon the beſt of hiſtories, wherein the tenour of his divine practice is repreſented to us; revolving frequently in our thoughts all the moſt conſiderable paſſages thereof, entertaining them with devout paſſions, impreſſing them on our memories, and ſtriving to expreſs them in our converſations: let us endeavour continually to walk in the ſteps of our Lord, and *to follow the Lamb whitherſoever he goeth*; which that we may be able to do, do thou, O bleſſed Redeemer, draw us, draw us by the cords of thy love; draw us by the ſenſe of thy goodneſs; draw us by the incomparable worth and excellency of thy perſon; draw us by the unſpotted purity and beauty of thy example; draw us by the merit of thy precious death, and

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and by the power of thy holy Spirit; *Draw us*, good Lord, *and we shall run after thee.* Amen. SERM. VI.

Almighty God, who hast given thine only Son to be unto us both a sacrifice for sin, and also an ensample of godly life; give us grace, that we may always most thankfully receive that his inestimable benefit; and also daily endeavour ourselves to follow the blessed steps of his most holy life, through the same Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen. Coll. for 2d Sund. after Easter.

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SERMON VII.

The Danger and Miſchief of delaying Repentance.

PSALM cxix. 60.

I made haſte, and delayed not to keep thy commandments.

THIS Pſalm (no leſs excellent in virtue, than large in bulk) containeth manifold reflections upon the nature, the properties, the adjuncts and effects of God's law; many ſprightly ejaculations about it (conceived in different forms of ſpeech; ſome in way of petition, ſome of thankſgiving, ſome of reſolution, ſome of aſſertion or aphoriſm;) many uſeful directions, many zealous exhortations to the obſervance of it; the which are not ranged in any ſtrict order, but (like a variety of fair flowers and wholeſome herbs in a wide field) do with a grateful confuſion lie diſperſed, as they freely did ſpring up in the heart, or were ſuggeſted by the devout ſpirit of him, who indited the Pſalm; whence no coherence of ſentences being deſigned, we may conſider any one of them abſolutely, or ſingly by itſelf.

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Among them, that which I have picked out for the ſubject of my diſcourſe, implieth an excellent rule of practice, authoriſed by the Pſalmiſt's exam-

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ple: it is propounded in way of devotion or immediate addreſs to God; unto whoſe infallible knowledge his conſcience maketh an appeal concerning his practice; not as boaſting thereof, but as praiſing God for it, unto whoſe gracious inſtruction and ſuccour he frequently doth aſcribe all his performances. But the manner of propounding I ſhall not inſiſt upon; the rule itſelf is, that ſpeedily, without any procraſtination or delay, we ſhould apply ourſelves to the obſervance of God's commandments; the practice of which rule it ſhall be my endeavour to recommend and preſs.

It is a common practice of men, that are engaged in bad courſes, which their own conſcience diſcerneth and diſapproveth, to adjourn the reformation of their lives to a farther time, ſo indulging themſelves in the preſent commiſſion of ſin, that yet they would ſeem to purpoſe and promiſe themſelves hereafter to repent and take up[a]: few reſolve to perſiſt finally in an evil way, or deſpair of being one day reclaimed; but immediately and effectually to ſet upon it, many deem unſeaſonable or needleſs; it will, they preſume, be ſoon enough to begin to-morrow, or next day, a month or a year hence, when they ſhall find more commodious opportunity, or ſhall prove better diſpoſed thereto: in the mean time with Solomon's ſluggard, *Yet*, ſay they, *a little ſleep, a little ſlumber, a little folding of the hands:* let us but neglect this duty, let us but ſatisfy this appetite, let us but enjoy this bout of pleaſure; hereafter, God willing, we mean to be more careful, we hope that we ſhall become more ſober: ſo like bad debtors, when our conſcience dunneth us, we always mean, we always promiſe to pay; if ſhe will ſtay a while, ſhe ſhall, we tell her, be ſatisfied; or like vain ſpendthrifts, we ſee our eſtate fly, yet preſume that it will hold out, and

Victuros agimus ſemper, nec vivimus unquam. *Mart.* l. 4.

Prov. vi. 10.

[a] Recognoſce ſingulos, conſidera univerſos, nullius non vita ſpectat in craſtinum; non enim vivunt, ſed victuri ſunt. *Sen. Ep.* 45.

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at length we ſhall reſerve enough for our uſe. Εἰς αὔριον τὰ σπουδαῖα, *Let ſerious buſineſs ſtay till the morrow*, was a ſaying that coſt dear to him who ſaid it; yet we in our greateſt concerns follow him. SERM. VII. Plut. in Pelop. Non eſt, crede mihi, ſapientis dicere, vivam. *Mart.* i. 16.

But how fallacious, how dangerous, and how miſchievous this manner of proceeding is; how much better and more adviſable it is, after the example propounded in our text, ſpeedily to betake ourſelves unto the diſcharge of our debt and duty to God, the following conſiderations will plainly declare.

1. We may conſider, that the obſervance of God's commandments (an obſervance of them proceeding from an habitual diſpoſition of mind, in a conſtant tenor of practice,) is our indiſpenſible duty, our main concernment, our only way to happineſs; the neceſſary condition of our attaining ſalvation; that alone, which can procure God's love and favour toward us; that unto which all real bleſſings here, and all bliſs hereafter, are inſeparably annexed: *Fear God, and keep his commandments, for this is the whole of man*; (the whole duty, the whole deſign, the whole perfection, the ſum of our wiſdom and our happineſs.) *If thou wilt enter into life, keep the commandments: The righteous Lord loveth righteouſneſs; his countenance doth behold the upright: God will render to every man according to his works:* theſe are oracles indubitably clear, and infallibly certain; theſe are immoveable terms of juſtice between God and man, which never will, never can be relaxed; being grounded on the immutable nature of God, and eternal reaſon of things: if God had not decreed, if he had not ſaid theſe things, they would yet aſſuredly be true; for it is a foul contradiction to reaſon, that a man ever ſhould pleaſe God without obeying him; it is a groſs abſurdity in nature, that a man ſhould be happy without being good: wherefore all the wit in the world cannot deviſe a way, all the authority upon earth (yea, I dare ſay, even in heaven itſelf) cannot Eccl. xii. 13. Matt. xix. 17. Pſal. xi. 7. Prov. xv. 9. Rom. ii. 6. Matt. v. 18. Luke xvi. 17. Pſal. cxix. 15.

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SERM. VII. eſtabliſh a condition, beſide faithful obſervance of God's law, that can ſave, or make us happy: from it there can be no valid diſpenſation, without it there can be no effectual abſolution, for it there can be no acceptable commutation; nor, in defect thereof, will any faith, any profeſſion, any trick or pretence whatever, avail or ſignify any thing: whatever expedient to ſupply its room ſuperſtition, miſtake, craft, or preſumption may recommend, we ſhall, relying thereon, be certainly deluded. If therefore we mean to be ſaved, (and are we ſo wild as not to mean it?) if we do not renounce felicity, (and do we not then renounce our wits?) to become virtuous, to proceed in a courſe of obedience, is a work that neceſſarily muſt be performed: and why then ſhould we not inſtantly undertake it? wherefore do we demur or ſtick at it? how can we at all reſt quiet, while an affair of ſo vaſt importance lieth upon our hands, or until our mind be freed of all uncertainty and ſuſpenſe about it? Were a probable way ſuggeſted to us of acquiring great wealth, honour, or pleaſure, ſhould we not quickly run about it? could we contentedly ſleep, till we had brought the buſineſs to a ſure or hopeful iſſue? and why with leſs expedition or urgency ſhould we purſue the certain means of our preſent ſecurity and comfort, of our final ſalvation and happineſs? In doing ſo, are we not ſtrangely inconſiſtent with ourſelves?

Again, diſobedience is the certain road to perdition; that which involveth us in guilt and condemnation, that which provoketh God's wrath and hatred againſt us, that which aſſuredly will throw us into a ſtate of eternal ſorrow and wretchedneſs: *The fooliſh ſhall not ſtand in God's ſight; he hateth all the workers of iniquity: If ye do not repent, ye ſhall periſh: The wicked ſhall be turned into hell, and all the people that forget God: The unrighteous ſhall not inherit the kingdom of God: The wicked ſhall go into everlaſting puniſhment:* theſe are denunciations no leſs ſure than ſevere,

Pſal. v. 5. Luke xiii. 3. Pſal. ix. 17. 1 Cor. vi. 9. Matt. xxv. 46. vii. 21.

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ſevere, from that mouth, which is never opened in vain; from the execution whereof there can be no ſhelter or refuge. And what wiſe man, what man in his right ſenſes, would for one minute ſtand obnoxious to them? Who, that any wiſe tendereth his own welfare, would move one ſtep forward in ſo perilous and deſtructive a courſe? the farther in which he proceedeth, the more he diſcoſteth from happineſs, the nearer he approacheth to ruin. SERM. VII.

In other caſes common ſenſe prompteth men to proceed otherwiſe; for who, having rendered one his enemy, that far overmatcheth him, and at whoſe mercy he ſtandeth, will not inſtantly ſue to be reconciled? Who, being ſeized by a pernicious diſeaſe, will not haſte to ſeek a cure? Who, being fallen into the jaws of a terrible danger, will not nimbly leap out thence? And ſuch plainly is our caſe: while we perſiſt in ſin, we live in enmity and defiance with the Almighty, who can at his pleaſure cruſh us; we lie under a fatal plague, which, if we do not ſeaſonably repent, will certainly deſtroy us; we incur the moſt dreadful of all hazards, abiding in the confines of death and deſtruction; God frowning at us, guilt holding us, hell gaping for us: every ſinner is, according to the Wiſe Man's expreſſion, *as he that lieth down in the midſt of the ſea, or as he that lieth upon the top of a maſt.* And he that is in ſuch a caſe, is he not mad or ſenſeleſs, if he will not forthwith labour to ſwim out thence, or make all ſpeed to get down into a ſafer place? Can any man with comfort lodge in a condition ſo diſmally tickliſh? Prov. xxiii. 34.

2. We may conſider, that, in order to our final welfare, we have much work to diſpatch, the which requireth as earneſt care and painful induſtry, ſo a competent long time; which, if we do not preſently fall on, may be wanting, and thence our work be left undone, or imperfect. To conquer and correct bad inclinations, to render our ſenſual appetites obſequious to reaſon, to compoſe our paſſions into a right

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SERM. VII.

right and ſteady order, to cleanſe our ſouls from vanity, from perverſeneſs, from ſloth, from all vicious diſtempers, and in their room to implant firm habits of virtue; to get a clear knowledge of our duty, with a ready diſpoſition to perform it; in fine, to ſeaſon our minds with holy affections, qualifying us for the preſence of God, and converſation with the bleſſed ſpirits above; theſe are things that muſt be done, but cannot be done in a trice; it is not *dictum factum*, as ſoon done as ſaid; but ὑπομονὴ ἔργου ἀγαθοῦ, *a patient continuance in well doing*, is needful to achieve it; for it no time can be redundant; the longeſt life can hardly be ſufficient: *Art is long, and life is ſhort*, may be an aphoriſm in divinity as well as in phyſic; the art of living well, of preſerving our ſoul's health, and curing its diſtempers, requireth no leſs time to compaſs it, than any other art or ſcience.

Rom. ii. 7.

Οὐ καθεύδουσιν ἡμῖν χρήματι βοηθεῖν ὁ θεός, ἀλλὰ πόνου μετοχῆς. Chryſ. ad Eph. λογ. κα'.

Virtue is not a muſhroom, that ſpringeth up of itſelf in one night, when we are aſleep, or regard it not; but a delicate plant, that groweth ſlowly and tenderly, needing much pains to cultivate it, much care to guard it, much time to mature it, in our untoward ſoil, in this world's unkindly weather: happineſs is a thing too precious to be purchaſed at an eaſy rate; heaven is too high to be come at without much climbing; the crown of bliſs is a prize too noble to be won without a long and a tough conflict. Neither is vice a ſpirit, that will be conjured down by a charm, or with a *preſto* driven away; it is not an adverſary, that can be knocked down at a blow, or diſpatched with a ſtab. Whoſoever ſhall pretend that at any time, eaſily, with a celerity, by a kind of *legerdemain*, or by any myſterious knack, a man may be ſettled in virtue, or converted from vice, common experience abundantly will confute him; which ſheweth, that a habit otherwiſe (ſetting miracles aſide) cannot be produced or deſtroyed, than by a conſtant exerciſe of acts ſuitable or oppoſite thereto; and that ſuch acts cannot be exerciſed without voiding

O quam iſtud parum putant, quibus tam facile videtur! *Quint.* xii. 1.

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ing all impediments, and framing all principles of action (ſuch as temper of body, judgment of mind, influence of cuſtom,) to a compliance; that who by temper is peeviſh or choleric, cannot, without maſtering that temper, become patient or meek; that who from vain opinions is proud, cannot, without conſidering away thoſe opinions, prove humble; that who by cuſtom is grown intemperate, cannot, without weaning himſelf from that cuſtom, come to be ſober; that who, from the concurrence of a ſorry nature, fond conceits, mean breeding, and ſcurvy uſage, is covetous, cannot, without draining all thoſe ſources of his fault, be turned into liberal. The change of our mind is one of the greateſt alterations in nature, which cannot be compaſſed in any way, or within any time we pleaſe; but it muſt proceed on leiſurely and regularly, in ſuch order, by ſuch ſteps, as the nature of things doth permit; it muſt be wrought by a reſolute and laborious perſeverance; by a watchful application of mind, in voiding prejudices, in waiting for advantages, in attending to all we do; by forcible wreſting our nature from its bent, and ſwimming againſt the current of impetuous deſires; by a patient diſentangling ourſelves from practices moſt agreeable and familiar to us; by a wary fencing with temptations, by long ſtruggling with manifold oppoſitions and difficulties; whence the holy Scripture termeth our practice a warfare, wherein we are to fight many a bloody battle with moſt redoubtable foes; a combat, which muſt be managed with our beſt ſkill and utmoſt might; a race, which we muſt paſs through with inceſſant activity and ſwiftneſs. SERM. VII.

If therefore we mean to be good, or to be happy, it behoveth us to loſe no time; to be preſently up at our great taſk; to ſnatch all occaſions, to embrace all means incident of reforming our hearts and lives. As thoſe, who have a long journey to go, do take care to ſet out early, and in their way make good

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SERM. VII. good ſpeed, leſt the night overtake them before they reach their home[b]; ſo it being a great way from hence to heaven, ſeeing we muſt paſs over ſo many obſtacles, through ſo many paths of duty, before we arrive thither, it is expedient to ſet forward as ſoon as can be, and to proceed with all expedition; the longer we ſtay, the more time we ſhall need, and the leſs we ſhall have.

3. We may conſider, that no future time, which we can fix upon, will be more convenient than the preſent is for our reformation. Let us pitch on what time we pleaſe, we ſhall be as unwilling and unfit to begin as we are now; we ſhall find in ourſelves the ſame indiſpoſitions, the ſame averſeneſs, or the ſame liſtleſſneſs toward it, as now: there will occur the like hardſhips to deter us, and the like pleaſures to allure us from our duty; objects will then be as preſent, and will ſtrike as ſmartly upon our ſenſes; the caſe will appear juſt the ſame, and the ſame pretences for delay will obtrude themſelves; ſo that we ſhall be as apt then as now to prorogue the buſineſs. We ſhall ſay then, to-morrow I will mend; and when that morrow cometh, it will be ſtill to-morrow, and ſo the morrow will prove endleſs[c]. If, like the ſimple ruſtic, (who ſtaid by the river-ſide waiting till it had done running, that ſo he might paſs dry-foot over the channel) we do conceit, that the ſources of ſin (bad inclinations within, and ſtrong temptations abroad,) will of themſelves be ſpent, or fail, we ſhall find ourſelves deluded[d]. If ever we

[b] Ἀλλ' ἄγε νῦν ἴομεν, δὴ γὰρ μέμβλωκε μάλιστα
Ἦμαρ, ἀτὰρ τάχα τοι ποτὶ ἕσπερα ῥίγιον ἔσται. *Hom. Od.* ρ'.

[c] Cras hoc fiet; idem cras fiet, &c. *Perſ. Sat.* v.
Qui non eſt hodie, cras minus aptus erit.
Ovid. de Rem. i. *Epiſt.* iv. 12.

[d] ——— qui recte vivendi prorogat horam,
Ruſticus expectat dum defluat amnis, at ille
Labitur, et labetur in omne volubilis ævum. *Hor. Ep.* i. 2.

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come to take up, we must have a beginning with some difficulty and trouble; we must courageously break through the present with all its enchantments; we must undauntedly plunge into the cold stream; we must rouse ourselves from our bed of sloth; we must shake off that brutish improvidence, which detaineth us; and why should we not essay it now? There is the same reason now that ever we can have; yea, far more reason now; for if that we now begin, hereafter at any determinate time, some of the work will be done, what remaineth will be shorter and easier to us[e]. Nay, farther,

4. We may consider, that the more we defer, the more difficult and painful our work must needs prove; every day will both enlarge our task and diminish our ability to perform it[f]. Sin is never at a stay; if we do not retreat from it, we shall advance in it; and the farther on we go, the more we have to come back; every step we take forward (even before we can return hither, into the state wherein we are at present,) must be repeated; all the web we spin must be unravelled; we must vomit up all we take in; which to do we shall find very tedious and grievous.

Vice, as it groweth in age, so it improveth in stature and strength; from a puny child it soon waxeth a lusty stripling, then riseth to be a sturdy man, and after a while becometh a massy giant, whom we shall scarce dare to encounter, whom we shall be very hardly able to vanquish; especially seeing that as it groweth taller and stouter, so we shall dwindle and prove more impotent; for it feedeth upon our vitals, and thriveth by our decay; it waxeth mighty by stripping us of our best forces, by enfeebling our

[e] Εἰ μὲν λυσιτελὴς ἡ ὑπέρθεσις ἐστι, ἡ παντελὴς ἀπόστασις αὐτῆς ἐστι λυσιτελέστερα. *Epict.* iv. 12.

For the same reason we put it off, we should put it away. If it be good at all, it is good at present.

[f] Παρὰ τὸ σήμερον ἁμαρτηθὲν εἰς τἄλλα χεῖρον ἀνάγκη σοι τὰ πράγματα ἔχειν. *Epict.* iv. 12.

reason,

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SERM. VII. reaſon, by perverting our will, by corrupting our temper, by debaſing our courage, by ſeducing all our appetites and paſſions to a treacherous compliance with itſelf: every day our mind groweth more blind, our will more reſty, our ſpirit more faint, our appetites more fierce, our paſſions more headſtrong and untameable [g]; the power and empire of ſin do ſtrangely by degrees encroach, and continually get ground upon us, till it hath quite ſubdued and enthralled us. Firſt we learn to bear it; then we come to like it; by and by we contract a friendſhip with it; then we dote upon it; at laſt we become enſlaved to it in a bondage, which we ſhall hardly be able, or willing, to ſhake off; when not only our necks are fitted to the yoke, our hands are manacled, and our feet ſhackled thereby; but our heads and hearts do conſpire in a baſe ſubmiſſion thereto: when vice hath made ſuch impreſſion on us, when this pernicious weed hath taken ſo deep root in our mind, will, and affection, it will demand an extremely toilſome labour to extirpate it.

Indeed, by continuance in ſin, the chief means (afforded by nature, or by grace,) of reſtraining or reducing us from it, are either cut off, or enervated and rendered ineffectual.

Natural modeſty, whilſt it laſteth, is a curb from doing ill; men in their firſt deflexions from virtue are baſhful and ſhy; out of regard to other men's opinion, and tenderneſs of their own honour, they are afraid or aſhamed to tranſgreſs plain rules of duty: but in proceſs, this diſpoſition weareth out [h],

[g] Falſis opinionibus tanto quiſque inſeritur, quanto magis in eis familiariuſque volutatur. *Aug. Ep.* 117.

[h] Μέγιστον πρὸς ἀρετὴν βούθημα ἡ αἰδώς. *Greg. Naz. Or.* 26.

——— nam quis
Peccandi finem poſuit ſibi, quando recepit
Ejectum ſemel attrita de fronte ruborem.
Juv. Sat. 18.

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by little and little they arrive to that character of the degenerate Jews, whom the Prophets call *impudent children*, having *a brow of braſs*, and *faces harder than a rock*; ſo that they commit ſin with open face, and in broad day, without any maſk, without a bluſh; they deſpiſe their own reputation, and defy all cenſure of others; they outface and outbrave the world, till at length, with prodigious inſolence, they come to boaſt of wickedneſs, and *glory in their ſhame*, as an inſtance of high courage and ſpecial gallantry. SERM. VII. Ezek. ii. 4. iii. 7. Iſa. xlviii. 4. Jer. v. 3. Prov. xxi. 29. Phil. iii. 19.

Conſcience is a check to beginners in ſin, reclaiming them from it, and rating them for it: but this in long ſtanders becometh uſeleſs, either failing to diſcharge its office, or aſſaying it to no purpoſe: having often been ſlighted, it will be weary of chiding; or, if it be not wholly dumb, we ſhall be deaf to its reproof[i]: as thoſe, who live by cataracts or downfalls of water, are, by continual noiſe, ſo deafened, as not to hear or mind it; ſo ſhall we in time grow ſenſeleſs, not regarding the loudeſt peals and rattlings of our conſcience.

The heart of a raw novice in impiety is ſomewhat tender and ſoft, ſo that remorſe can pierce and ſting it; his neck is yielding and ſenſible, ſo that the yoke of ſin doth gall it: but in ſtout proficients the heart becometh hard and ſtony, the neck ſtiff and brawny; (*an iron ſinew*, as the Prophet termeth it;) ſo that they do not feel or reſent any thing; but are like thoſe, of whom St. Paul ſpeaketh: οἵτινες ἀπηλγηκότες, who *being paſt feeling* all ſorrow or ſmart, *have given themſelves over unto laſciviouſneſs, to work all uncleanneſs with greedineſs*. (Ezek. ii. 4. iii. 7. Neh. ix. 29. 2 Chron. xxxvi. 13. Dan. v. 20.) Iſa. xlviii. 4. Quo quis pejus ſe habet, minus ſentit. *Sen. Ep.* 53. Eph. iv. 19.

When firſt we nibble at the bait, or enter into bad courſes, our reaſon doth conteſt and remonſtrate againſt it, faithfully repreſenting to us the folly, the uglineſs, the baſeneſs, the manifold ill conſequences

[i] Ψυχὴ ἅπαξ ἁμαρτίας γευσαμένη καὶ ἀναλγήτως διατεθεῖσα πολλὴν παρέχει τῷ νοσήματι τὴν προσθήκην, &c. *Chryſ. Tom. Orat.* 64.

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SERM. VII. of ſinning; but that, by continuance, is muffled, ſo as not to diſcern, or muzzled, ſo as not to declare; yea, often is ſo debauched as to excuſe, to avow, and maintain, yea, to applaud and extol our miſcarriages.

For a time, a man retaineth ſome courage, and a hope that he may repent; but progreſs in ſin diſpiriteth and caſteth into deſpair, whether God be placable, whether himſelf be corrigible: an apprehenſion concerning the length of the way, or the difficulty of the work, diſcourageth; and deſpondency rendereth him heartleſs and careleſs to attempt it. There is no man that hath heard of God, who hath not at firſt ſome dread of offending him, and ſome diſſatisfaction in tranſgreſſing his will; it appearing to his mind, not yet utterly blinded and depraved, a deſperate thing to brave his irreſiſtible power, an abſurd thing to thwart his infallible wiſdom, a deteſtable thing to abuſe his immenſe goodneſs: but obſtinacy in ſin doth quaſh this conſcientious awe; ſo that at length *God is not in all his thoughts, the fear of God is not before his eyes*; the wrath of the Almighty ſeemeth a bugbear, the fierceſt menaces of Religion ſound but as rattles to him.

Pſal. x. 4. xxxvi. 1.

As for the gentle whiſpers and touches of divine grace, the monitory diſpenſations of Providence, the good advices and wholeſome reproofs of friends, with the like means of reclaiming ſinners; theſe to perſons *ſettled on their lees*, or fixed in bad cuſtom, are but as guſts of wind bruſhing an old oak, or as waves daſhing on a rock, without at all ſhaking or ſtirring it.

Jer. xlviii. 11. Zeph. i. 12.

Now when any perſon is come to this paſs, it muſt be hugely difficult to reduce him; to retrieve a defloured modeſty, to quicken a jaded conſcience, to ſupple a callous heart, to reſettle a baffled reaſon, to rear a dejected courage, to recover a ſoul miſerably benumbed and broken, to its former vigour and integrity, can be no eaſy matter.

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The diſeaſes of our ſoul, no leſs than thoſe of our body, when once they are inveterate, they are become more incurable; the longer we forbear to apply due remedy, the more hard their cure will prove: if we let them proceed far, we muſt, ere we can be rid of them, undergo a courſe of phyſic very tedious and offenſive to us; many a rough purge, many a ſore phlebotomy, many an irkſome ſweat we muſt endure [k]. Yea, farther, SERM. VII.

5. We may conſider, that by delaying to amend, to do it may become quite impoſſible; it may be ſo in the nature of the thing, it may be ſo by the will of God: the thing may become naturally impoſſible; for vice by cuſtom may paſs into nature, and prove ſo congenial, as if it were born with us; ſo that we ſhall propend to it, as a ſtone falleth down, or as a ſpark flieth upward: by ſoaking in voluptuouſneſs, we may be ſo transformed into brutes, by ſteeping in malice ſo converted into fiends, that we neceſſarily ſhall act like creatures of that kind, into which we are degenerated; and then in no wiſe, without a downright miracle, are we capable of being reformed [l]. *How long*, ſaith Solomon, *wilt thou ſleep, O ſluggard? when wilt thou ariſe out of thy ſleep?* We may be ſo often called on; and it is not eaſy to awaken us, when we are got into a ſpiritual ſlumber; but when we are *dead in treſpaſſes and ſins*, ſo that all breath of holy affection is ſtopped, and no ſpiritual pulſe from our heart doth appear; that all ſenſe of duty is loſt, all appetite to good doth fail, no ſtrength or activity to move in a good courſe doth exert itſelf, that our good complexion is diſſolved, Prov. vi. 9; Eph. ii. 1. Apoc. iii. 1. 1 Tim. v. 6.

[k] ——— fruſtra medicina paratur,
Cum mala per longas invaluere moras. *Ovid.*
Ῥᾷον ἀπ' ἀρχῆς μὴ ἐνδῦναι κακίᾳ, ἢ προσιᾶσαι διαφυγεῖν, ἢ προβαινοῦσαν ἀνακόψαι. *Greg. Naz. Orat.* 26.

[l] Ἐπειδὰν εἰς φρενίτιν ἐκπεσόντες λακτίζωσι καὶ δάκνωσι τοὺς βυλομένους ἀπαλλάξαι τῆς ἀῤῥωστίας αὐτούς, τότε νοσοῦσιν ἀίατα. *Chryſ. in Babyl. Orat.* 2.

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SERM. VII. and all our finer ſpirits are diſſipated, that our mind is quite crazed, and all its powers are ſhattered or ſpoiled; when thus, I ſay, we are ſpiritually dead, how can we raiſe ourſelves, what beneath omnipotency can effect it? As a ſtick, when once it is dry and ſtiff, you may break it, but you can never bend it into a ſtraighter poſture; ſo doth the man become incorrigible, who is ſettled and ſtiffened in vice. The ſtain of habitual ſin may ſink in ſo deep, and ſo thoroughly tincture all our ſoul, that we may be like thoſe people, of whom the Prophet ſaith, *Can the Ethiopian change his ſkin, or the leopard his ſpots? Then may ye do good, that are accuſtomed to do evil.* Such an impoſſibility may ariſe from nature; one greater and more inſuperable may come from God.

Frangas citius quam corrigas, quæ in pravum induruerunt. *Quintil.* i. 3.

Jer. xiii. 23.

To an effectual repentance, the ſuccour of divine grace is neceſſary; but that is arbitrarily diſpenſed; *the ſpirit bloweth where it liſteth*; yet it liſteth wiſely, with regard both to the paſt behaviour and preſent capacities of men; ſo that to ſuch who have abuſed it, and to ſuch who will not treat it well, it ſhall not be imparted. And can we be well aſſured, can we reaſonably hope, that after we by our preſumptuous delays have put off God, and dallied with his grace; after that he long in vain hath *waited to be gracious*; after that he hath endured ſo many neglects, and ſo many repulſes from us; after that we frequently have ſlighted his open invitations, and ſmothered his kindly motions in us; in ſhort, after we ſo unworthily have miſuſed his goodneſs and patience, that he farther will vouchſafe his grace to us; when we have forfeited it, when we have rejected it, when we have ſpurned and driven it away, can we hope to recover it?

John iii. 8.

Τὸ πνεῦμα τῆς χάριτος ἐνύβρισας. Heb. x. 29.

Ἀδύνατον. Heb. vi. 4.

There is a time, a ſeaſon, a day, allotted to us; *our day* it is termed, *a day of ſalvation, the ſeaſon of our viſitation, an acceptable time*; wherein God freely doth exhibit grace, and preſenteth his mercy to us: if we let this day ſlip, *the night cometh, when no man can*

Luke xix. 42. 44. 2 Cor. vi. 2. Heb. iii. 13. John ix. 4.

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can work; when *the things belonging to our peace will* SERM. *be hidden from our eyes*; when (as the Prophet ex- VII. preſſeth it) we ſhall *grope for the wall like the blind,*——— *and ſtumble at noon-day as in the night, and be in de-* Luke xix. *ſolate places as dead men:* after that day is ſpent, and 42. Iſa. lix. 10. that comfortable light is ſet, a diſmal night of darkneſs, of cold, of diſconſolateneſs, will ſucceed; when God being *weary of bearing* with men, doth utterly Jer. xv. 6. deſert them, and *delivereth them over to a reprobate* Mal. ii. 17. Iſa. i. 14. *mind*; when ſubtracting his gracious direction and vii. 13. aſſiſtance, *he giveth them over to their own hearts' luſts,* Rom. i. 24. xxvi. 28. *and to walk in their own counſels*; when they are Pſal. lxxxi. brought to complain with thoſe in the Prophet, *O* 12. Iſa. lxiii. 17. *Lord, why haſt thou made us to err from thy ways, and hardened our heart from thy fear?* when, like Pharaoh, Rom. ix. they ſurvive only as objects of God's juſtice, or oc- 17. caſions to glorify his power; when, like Eſau, they cannot find a place of repentance, *although they ſeek* Heb. xii. *it carefully with tears*; when, as to the fooliſh loiter- 17. ing virgins, *the door* of mercy *is ſhut upon them*; when Matt. xxv. the *maſter of the houſe doth riſe, and ſhut the door*, &c. 10. Luke xiii. when that menace of divine wiſdom cometh to be 25. executed; *They ſhall call upon me, but I will not an-* Prov. i. 28, *ſwer; they ſhall ſeek me early, but they ſhall not find* 29. *me; for that they hated knowledge, and did not chooſe the fear of the Lord.* And if, neglecting our ſeaſon and preſent means, we once fall into this ſtate, then is our caſe moſt deplorable; we are dead men irreverſibly doomed, and only for a few moments reprieved from the ſtroke of final vengeance; *we are* Rom. ix. *veſſels of wrath fitted* (or made up) *for deſtruction*; by 22. Κατηρτισμένα εἰς ἀπώλειαν. a fatal blindneſs and obduration ſealed up to ruin; Heb. vi. 7, we are like the *terra damnata, that earth* (in the Apoſtle) *which drinking up the rain that cometh oft upon it,* 8. *and bearing thorns and briars, is rejected, and is nigh unto curſing*, and *whoſe end is to be burned.* Wherefore, according to the advice of the Prophet, *Seek ye the* Iſa. lv. 6. *Lord when he may be found, call ye upon him while he is near.*

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SERM. VII. It is true, that God is ever ready, upon our true converſion, to receive us into favour; that his arms are always open to embrace a ſincere penitent; that he hath declared, *whenever a wicked man turneth from his wickedneſs, and doeth that which is right, he ſhall ſave his ſoul alive*; that if *we do waſh ourſelves, make us clean, put away the evil of our doings, and ceaſe to do evil*, then, *although our ſins be as ſcarlet, they ſhall be white as ſnow; though they be like crimſon, they ſhall be as wool*; that if *we rend our hearts, and turn unto the Lord, he is gracious and merciful, and will repent of the evil*; that *God is good and ready to forgive, and plenteous in mercy unto all that call upon him*; that whenever a prodigal ſon, with humble confeſſion and hearty contrition for his ſin, doth *ariſe and go to his father*, he will embrace him tenderly, and entertain him kindly; that even a profane apoſtate, and a bloody oppreſſor (as Manaſſes), a lewd ſtrumpet (as Magdalene), a notable thief (as he upon the croſs), a timorous renouncer (as St. Peter), a furious perſecutor (as St. Paul), a ſtupid idolater (as all the Heathen world, when the Goſpel came to them, was), the moſt heinous ſinner that ever hath been, or can be imagined to be, if he be diſpoſed to repent, is capable of mercy: thoſe declarations and promiſes are infallibly true; thoſe inſtances peremptorily do evince, that repentance is never ſuperannuated; that if we can turn at all, we ſhall not turn too late; that *pœnitentia nunquam ſera, modo ſeria*, is an irrefragable rule. Yet nevertheleſs delay is very unſafe; for what aſſurance can we have, that God hereafter will enable us to perform thoſe conditions of bewailing our ſins, and forſaking them? Have we not cauſe rather to fear that he will chaſtiſe our preſumption by withholding his grace? For although God faileth not to yield competent aids to perſons, who have not *deſpiſed his goodneſs and long-ſuffering, that leadeth them to repentance*; yet he that wilfully or wantonly loitereth away the time, and ſquandereth the means allowed him; who refuſeth to come when

Ezek. xviii. 27.

Iſa. i. 16. 18.

Joel ii. 13.

Pſal. lxxxvi. 5.

Luke xv. 18.

Vid. Chryſ. ad Theod. ii. Judas (ſaith he there) was capable of pardon.

Rom. ii. 4.

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when God calleth, yea wooeth and courteth him to repentance, how can he pretend to find ſuch favour? SERM. VII.

We might add, that ſuppoſing God in ſuperabundance of mercy might be preſumed never to withhold his grace; yet ſeeing his grace doth not work by irreſiſtible compulſion; ſeeing the worſe qualified we are, the more apt we ſhall be to croſs and defeat its operation; ſeeing that we cannot hope that hereafter we ſhall be more fit than now to comply with it; yea ſeeing we may be ſure, that, after our hearts are hardened by perſeverance in ſin, we ſhall be more indiſpoſed thereto; we by delay of repentance do not only venture the forfeiture of divine grace, but the danger of abuſing it, which heinouſly will aggravate our guilt, and hugely augment our puniſhment.

We ſhould do well therefore moſt ſeriouſly to regard the Apoſtle's admonition; *Exhort one another to-day, while it is called to-day, leſt any of you be hardened by the deceitfulneſs of ſin.* Now that we find ourſelves invited to repent, now that we apprehend ſo much reaſon for it; now that we feel our hearts ſomewhat inclined thereto; now that we have time in our hands, and are not barred from hopes of mercy; now that it is not extremely difficult, or not abſolutely impoſſible, let us in God's name lay hold on the occaſion, let us ſpeedily and earneſtly ſet upon the work. Farther yet, Heb. iii. 13.

6. We ſhould conſider, that we are mortal and frail, and thence any deſigns of future reformation may be clipt off, or intercepted by death; which is always creeping toward us, and may, for all we can tell, be very near at hand. You ſay you will repent to-morrow: but are you ſure you ſhall have a morrow to repent in? Have you an hour in your hand, or one minute at your diſpoſal? Have you a leaſe to ſhew for any term of life? Can you claim or reckon upon the leaſt portion of time, without his leave, who beſtoweth life, and dealeth out time, and ordereth

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SERM. VII. all things as he pleaſeth [m]? Can you any wiſe deſcry the juſt *meaſure of your days*, or *the bounds of your appointed time*, without a ſpecial revelation from him, *in whoſe hands is your breath*; and *with whom* alone *the number of your months is* regiſtered? *Boaſt not thyſelf of to-morrow*; *for thou knoweſt not what a day may bring forth*, ſaith the Wiſe Man: boaſt not of it, that is, do not pretend it to be at thy diſpoſal, preſume not upon any thing that may befal therein; for whilſt thou preſumeſt thereon, may it not be ſaid unto thee, as to the rich projector in the Goſpel, *Thou fool, this night ſhall thy ſoul be required of thee.* Doth not, ſecluding hidden decrees, every man's life hang upon a thread very ſlender and frail? Is it not ſubject to many diſeaſes lurking within, and to a thouſand accidents flying about us? How many, that might have promiſed themſelves as fair ſcope as we can, have been unexpectedly ſnapt away? How many have been cropt in the flower of their age, and vigour of their ſtrength? Doth not every day preſent experiments of ſudden death? Do we not continually ſee that obſervation of the Preacher verified, *Man knoweth not his time: as the fiſhes that are taken in an evil net, and as the birds are caught in the ſnare, ſo are the ſons of men ſnared in an evil time, when it cometh ſuddenly upon them?* Old men are ready to drop of themſelves, and young men are eaſily bruſhed or ſhaken down [n]; the former viſibly ſtand upon the brink of eternity, the latter walk upon a bottomleſs quag, into which unawares they may ſlump; who then can any wiſe be ſecure? We are all therefore highly concerned to uſe our life, while we have it; to catch the firſt opportunity, leſt all

Job xii. 10. xiv. 5. vii. 1. Pſal. xxxix. 4. xc. 12. Dan. v. 23. Prov. xxvii. 1. Οὐκ οἶδας τι τίξεται ἐπιοῦσα· μὴ ἐπαγγέλλου τὰ μὴ σά. *Baſ. M. exh. ad Bapt.* Luke xii. 20. Eccleſ. ix. 12.

[m] Qui pœnitenti veniam ſpoſpondit, peccanti craſtinum diem non promiſit. *Greg. in Evang. Hom.* ix.

[n] Τί γὰρ οἶδας, ἀνθρωπε ἁμαρτήσας, εἰ ἡμέρας ζήσεις ἐν τῷδε τῷ βίῳ, ἵνα καὶ μετανοήσῃς, &c.

Ὅτι ἄδηλον ἡ ἔξοδός σου ἐκ τοῦ βίου ὑπάρχει, καὶ ἐν ἁμαρτίᾳ τελευτήσαντι μετάνοια οὐκ ἔσται, &c. *Conſt. Ap.* ii. 12.

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opportunity forſake us; to cut off our ſinning, leſt ourſelves be cut off before it: and that the rather, becauſe by laviſhing, or miſemploying our preſent time, we may loſe the future, provoking God to bereave us of it; for as prolongation of time is a reward of piety; as to obſervance of the commandments it is promiſed, *Length of days and long life, and peace ſhall be added unto thee*; ſo being immaturely ſnatched hence is the puniſhment awarded to impious practice: ſo it is threatened, that *Evil men ſhall be cut off*; that *bloody and deceitful men ſhall not live out half their days*; that *God will wound the head of his enemies, and the hairy ſcalp of ſuch an one as goeth on ſtill in his wickedneſs*: the very being unmindful of their duty is the cauſe, why men are thus ſurpriſed; for, *If*, ſaith God, *thou doſt not watch, I ſhall come upon thee as a thief; and thou ſhalt not know when I come upon thee.* And, *If*, ſaith our Lord, *that ſervant doth ſay in his heart, My Lord delayeth his coming*, &c. *The Lord of that ſervant will come in a day when he looketh not for him*, &c.

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Prov. iii. 2. Pſal. xxxvii. 9. Pſal. lv. 23. Pſal. lxviii. 21. Rev. iii. 3, xvi. 15. Luke xii. 45, 46.

If then it be certain, that we muſt render a ſtrict account of all our doings here; if, by reaſon of our frail nature and ſlippery ſtate, it be uncertain when we ſhall be ſummoned thereto; if our negligence may abridge and accelerate the term; is it not very reaſonable to obſerve thoſe advices of our Lord; *Watch, for ye do not know the day, nor the hour, when the Son of man cometh: Take heed to yourſelves, leſt at any time your heart be overcharged with ſurfeiting and drunkenneſs, and cares of this life, and ſo that day come upon you unawares. Let your loins be girded about, and your lamps burning, and ye yourſelves like men that wait for your Lord:* and to take the counſel of the Wiſe Man, *Make no tarrying to turn unto the Lord, and put not off from day to day; for ſuddenly ſhall the wrath of the Lord come forth, and in thy ſecurity ſhalt thou be deſtroyed, and periſh in the day of vengeance.*

Matt. xxv. 13. xxiv. 42. Mark xiii. 33. Luke xii. 15, 35, 36. Eccluſ. v. 7.

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SERM. VII. Theſe conſiderations plainly do ſhew how very fooliſh, how extremely dangerous and deſtructive the procraſtinating our reformation of life is: there are ſome others of good moment, which we ſhall reſerve.

SERMON

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SERMON VIII.

The Danger and Miſchief of delaying Repentance.

PSAL. cxix. 60.

I made haſte, and delayed not to keep thy commandments.

SERM. VIII.

I PROCEED to the conſiderations which yet remain to be ſpoken to.

1. We may conſider the cauſes of delay in this caſe (as in all caſes of moment) to be bad and unworthy of a man: what can they be but either ſtupidity, that we do not apprehend the importance of the affair; or improvidence, that we do not attend to the danger of perſiſting in ſin; or negligence, that we do not mind our concernments; or ſloth, that keepeth us from rouſing and beſtirring ourſelves in purſuance of what appeareth expedient; or faintheartedneſs and cowardice, that we dare not attempt to croſs our appetite, or our fancy? All which diſpoſitions are very baſe and ſhameful. It is the prerogative of human nature to be ſagacious in eſtimating the worth, and provident in deſcrying the conſequences of things; whereas other creatures, by impulſe of ſenſe, do only fix their regard on preſent appearances; which peculiar excellency by ſtupidity and

Ἀργίας πρόφασις ἡ ἀναξολή. Simpl.

Animal hoc providum, ſagax, &c. *Cic. de Leg.* i. *Cic. de Offic.* i.

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SERM. VIII. and improvidence we forfeit, degenerating into brutes; and negligence of that, which we diſcern mainly to concern us, is a quality ſomewhat beneath thoſe, depreſſing us below beaſts, which cannot be charged with ſuch a fault; ſloth is no leſs deſpicable, rendering a man fit for nothing; nor is there any thing commonly more reproachful than want of courage: ſo bad are the cauſes of delay.

2. And the effects are no leſs unhappy, being diſappointment, damage, trouble, and ſorrow. As expedition (catching advantages and opportunities, keeping the ſpirit up in its heat and vigour, making forcible impreſſions wherever it lighteth, driving on the current of ſucceſs) doth ſubdue buſineſs, and achieve great exploits (as by practiſing his motto, *to defer nothing*, Alexander did accompliſh thoſe mighty feats, which make ſuch a clatter in ſtory; and Cæſar more by the rapid quickneſs and forwardneſs of undertaking, than by the greatneſs of courage, and ſkilfulneſs of conduct, did work out thoſe enterpriſes, which purchaſed to his name ſo much glory and renown;) ſo delay and ſlowneſs do ſpoil all buſineſs, do keep off ſucceſs at diſtance from us; thereby opportunity is loſt, and advantages ſlip away; our courage doth flag, and our ſpirit languiſheth; our endeavours ſtrike faintly, and are eaſily repelled; whence diſappointment neceſſarily doth ſpring, attended with vexation [o].

Μηδὲν ἀναβαλλόμενον. Succeſſus urgere ſuos, inſtare, &c. *Luc.* i.

3. Again, we may conſider, that to ſet upon our duty is a great ſtep toward the performance of it: if we can reſolve well, and a little puſh forward, we are in a fair way to diſpatch; *to begin*, they ſay, *is to have half done*; to ſet out is a good part of the journey; to riſe betimes, is often harder than to do all the

[o] Pleriſque in rebus tarditas et procraſtinatio odioſa eſt. *Cic. Philip.* 6.

Αἰεὶ δ' ἀμβολιεργὸς ἀνὴρ ἄτῃσι παλαίει. *Heſ.*

Dum deliberamus quando incipiendum eſt, incipere jam ſerum eſt. *Quint.* xii. 7.

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day's work [p]: entering the town is almoſt the ſame with taking it; it is ſo in all buſineſs, it is chiefly ſo in moral practice: for if we can find in our hearts to take our leave of ſin, if we can diſengage ourſelves from the witcheries of preſent allurement; if we can but get over the threſhold of virtuous converſation, we ſhall find the reſt beyond expectation ſmooth and expedite; we ſhall diſcover ſuch beauty in virtue, we ſhall taſte ſo much ſweetneſs in obedience, as greatly will encourage us to proceed therein [q].

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4. Again: we may conſider, that our time itſelf is a gift, or a talent committed to us, for the improvement whereof we are reſponſible no leſs than for our wealth, our power, our credit, our parts, and other ſuch advantages, wherewith for the ſerving of God, and furthering our own ſalvation, we are entruſted: *To redeem the time* is a precept, and of all precepts the moſt neceſſary to be obſerved; for that without redeeming (that is embracing and well employing) time we can do nothing well; no good action can be performed, no good reward can be procured by us: well may we be adviſed to take our beſt care in huſbanding it, ſeeing juſtly of all things it may be reckoned moſt precious; its price being ineſtimable, and its loſs irreparable; for all the world cannot purchaſe one moment of it more than is allowed us; neither can it, when once gone, by any means be recovered: ſo much indeed as we ſave thereof, ſo much we preſerve of ourſelves; and ſo far as we loſe it, ſo far in effect we ſlay ourſelves, or deprive ourſelves of life; yea by miſ-ſpending it we do worſe than ſo, for a dead ſleep, or ceſſation from be-

Eph. v. 16. Col. iv. 5.

πολυτιμότατον ἀγαθόν.

[p] Dimidium facti qui cœpit habet. *Hor. Ep.* i. 2.
Μόνον ἀρχὴν ἐπιθεῖς τῷ πράγματι, &c. *Chryſ. Tom.* 6. *Orat.* p. 68.
Τὸ δυσχερὲς καὶ δυσκατόρθωτον τοῦτο ἐστι, τὸ δυνηθῆναι ἐπιβῆναι τῆς εἰσόδου καὶ τῶν προθύρων ἄψασθαι τῆς μετανοίας. *Ib.* p. 79.

[q] Honeſtas, quæ principio anxia habetur, ubi contigerit, voluptati luxuriæque habetur. *Vict. in Sept. Sev.*

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SERM. VIII. ing, is not ſo bad as doing ill; all that while we live backward, or decline toward a ſtate much worſe than annihilation itſelf. Farther,

Omnia quæ ventura ſunt in incerto jacent, protinus vive. *Sen. de Vit. brev.* 9.

5. Conſider, that of all time the preſent is ever the beſt for the purpoſe of amending our life. It is the only ſure time, that which we have in our hands, and may call our own; whereas the paſt time is irrevocably gone from us; and the future may never come to us: it is abſolutely (reckoning from our becoming ſenſible of things, and accountable for our actions,) the beſt, as to our capacity of improving it;

Virg. Georg. 3. Optima quæque dies miſeris mortalibus ævi
Prima fugit.

Our beſt days do firſt paſs away, was truly ſaid; the nearer to its ſource our life is, the purer it is from ſtain, the freer from clogs, the more ſuſceptive of good impreſſions, the more vivid and briſk in its activity; the farther we go on, eſpecially in a bad courſe, the nearer we verge to the dregs of our life; the more dry, the more ſtiff, the more ſluggiſh we grow: delay therefore doth ever ſteal away the flour of our age, leaving us the bran and refuſe thereof. Again,

Sera nimis vita eſt craſtina, vive hodie. *Mart.* i. 16.

6. If at any time we do reflect upon the time that hath already ſlipped away unprofitably from us, it will ſeem more than enough, and (if we conſider well) it will be grievous to us to loſe more; the morrow will ſeem too late to commence a good life; ἀρκετὸς ὁ παρεληλυθὼς χρόνος, *The time paſt of our life*, ſaith St. Peter, *may ſuffice us to have wrought the will of the Gentiles*, or to have continued in ill courſes: more indeed it might than ſuffice; it ſhould be abundantly too much to have embezzled ſo large a portion of our precious and irreparable time: after we have ſlept in neglect of our duty, ὥρα ἤδη ἐγερθῆναι, *it is*, as St. Paul ſaith, *now high time to awake*, unto a vigilant obſervance thereof: this we ſhall the rather do, if we conſider, that,

1 Pet. iv. 3.

Rom. xiii. 11.

7. For ill living now we ſhall come hereafter to be ſorry, if not with a wholeſome contrition, yet with a painful

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painful regret; we ſhall certainly one day repent, if not of our ſin, yet of our ſinning; if not ſo as to correct for the future, yet ſo as to condemn ourſelves for what is paſt: the conſideration of our having ſacrilegiouſly robbed our Maker of the time due to his ſervice; of our having injuriouſly defrauded our ſouls of the opportunities granted to ſecure their welfare; of our having profuſely caſt away our moſt precious hours of life upon vanity and folly, will ſometime twitch us ſorely. There is no man, who doth not with a ſorrowful eye review an ill-paſt life; who would not gladly recall his miſ-ſpent time; *O mihi præteritos!* O that God would reſtore my paſt years to me, is every ſuch man's prayer, although it never was heard, never could be granted unto any. And what is more inconſiſtent with wiſdom, than to engage ourſelves upon making ſuch ineffectual and fruitleſs wiſhes? What is more diſagreeable to reaſon, than to do that, for which we muſt be forced to confeſs and call ourſelves fools? What man of ſenſe for a flaſh of tranſitory pleaſure, for a puff of vain repute, for a few ſcraps of dirty pelf, would plunge himſelf into ſuch a gulf of anguiſh?

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8. On the contrary, if, laying hold on occaſion, we ſet ourſelves to do well, reflection thereon will yield great ſatisfaction and pleaſure to us; we ſhall be glad that we have done, and that our taſk is over; we ſhall *enjoy our former life:* our time which is ſo paſt will not yet be loſt unto us; but rather it will be moſt ſecurely ours, laid up beyond the reach of danger, in the repoſitory of a good conſcience[r].

9. Again, all our time of continuance in ſin we do *treaſure up wrath*, or accumulate guilt; and the larger our guilt is, the ſorer muſt be our repentance; the more bitter the ſorrow, the more low the humbling,

Rom. ii. 5. Quam magna deliquimus, tam granditer defleamus, &c. *Cypr. de Lapſ. Or.* 5.

[r] Ille ſapit quiſquis, Poſthume, vixit heri. *Mart.* v. 60.
Ampliat ætatis ſpatium ſibi vir bonus; hoc eſt
Vivere bis, vita poſſe priore frui. *Mart.* x. 23.

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SERM. VIII. bling, the more earneſt the deprecation requiſite to obtain pardon; the broader and deeper the ſtain is, the more waſhing is needful to get it out; if we ſin much and long, we muſt grieve anſwerably, or we ſhall be no fit objects of mercy.

10. And whenever the ſin is pardoned, yet indelible marks and monuments thereof will abide. We ſhall eternally be obliged to cry *peccavi*: although the puniſhment may be remitted, the deſert of it cannot be removed; a ſcar from it will ſtick in our fleſh, which ever will deform us; a tang of it will ſtay in our memory, which always will be diſguſtful; we ſhall never reflect on our miſcarriages without ſome confuſion and horror[a]; inceſſantly we ſhall be liable to that queſtion of St. Paul, *What fruit had ye of thoſe things, whereof ye are now aſhamed?* If, therefore, we could reaſonably preſume, yea if we could certainly foreſee, that we ſhould hereafter in time repent, yet it were unadviſable to perſiſt in ſin, ſeeing it being once committed, can never be reverſed, never expunged from the regiſters of time, never daſhed out from the tables of our mind and memory; but will perpetually reſt as matter of doleful conſideration, and of tragical ſtory to us. *Then ſhalt thou remember thy ways, and be aſhamed. That thou mayſt remember and be confounded, and never open thy mouth any more becauſe of thy ſhame, when I am pacified toward thee for all that thou haſt done, ſaith the Lord God. Then ſhall ye remember your own evil ways, and your doings that were not good, and ſhall loathe yourſelves in your own ſight, for your iniquities, and for your abominations.*

Rom. vi. 21.

Ezek. xvi. 61. 63.

Ezek. xxxvi. 31. xx. 43.

11. Again, ſo much time as we ſpend in diſobedience, ſo much of reward we do forfeit; for com-

[a] Pœna poteſt demi, culpa perennis erit. *Ovid.*

Ἡ συγχώρησις ἐγίνετο τῶν ἁμαρτημάτων παρὰ τῷ Θεῷ, καὶ ἡ μνήμη τῶν συγκεχωρημένων ἁμαρτημάτων οὐκ ἠφανίζετο παρὰ τῷ Παύλῳ. *Chryſ.* tom. viii. p. 97.

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menſurate to our works ſhall our rewards be; the SERM. fewer our good works are in the courſe of our pre- VIII. ſent life, the ſmaller ſhall be the meaſures of joy, of glory, of felicity diſpenſed to us hereafter; the later conſequently we repent, the leſs we ſhall be happy: *One ſtar*, ſaith the Apoſtle, *differeth from another in* 1 Cor. xv. *glory*; and of all ſtars, thoſe in the celeſtial ſphere 41. will ſhine brighteſt, who did ſoon riſe here, and continued long, by the luſtre of their good works, to glorify their heavenly Father; for *the path of the juſt* Prov. iv. 18. *is as the ſhining light, that ſhineth more and more unto the perfect day*. While, therefore, we let our intereſt lie dead by lingering, or run behind by ſinful practice, we are very bad huſbands for our ſoul; our ſpiritual eſtate doth thereby hugely ſuffer; every minute contracteth a damage, that runneth through millions of ages, and which therefore will amount to an immenſe ſum: and who for all the pleaſures here would forego one degree of bliſsful joy hereafter? who for all earthly ſplendors would exchange one ſpark of celeſtial glory? who for all the treaſures below would let ſlip one gem out of his heavenly crown?

12. Farther, let us conſider that whatever our age, whatever our condition or caſe be, the advice not to procraſtinate our obedience is very ſuitable and uſeful.

Art thou young? then it is moſt proper to enter upon living well. For when we ſet out, we ſhould be put in a right way; when we begin to be men, we ſhould begin to uſe our reaſon well; life and virtue ſhould be of the ſame ſtanding. What is more ugly than a child, that hath learnt little, having learnt to do ill? than naughtineſs ſpringing up in that ſtate of innocence? The foundation of good life is to be laid in that age, upon which the reſt of our life is built; for this is the manner of our proceeding; the preſent always dependeth upon what is paſt; our practice is guided by notions that we had ſucked

Sub pedagogo cœperis licet, ſerum eſt. *Mart.* viii. 44.

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SERM. VIII. ſucked in, is ſwayed by inclinations that we got before; whence uſually our firſt judgments of things, and our firſt propenſions do ſtretch their influence upon the whole future life. *Train up a child in the way he ſhould go, and when he is old he will not depart from it*, ſaith the Wiſe Man.

Prov. xxii. 6.

That age, as it is moſt liable to be corrupted by vice, ſo it is moſt capable of being imbued with virtue; then nature is ſoft and pliable, ſo as eaſily to be moulded into any ſhape, ready to admit any ſtamp impreſſed thereon [t]; then the mind is a pure table, in which good principles may be fairly engraven, without raſing out any former ill prejudices; then the heart being a ſoil free of weeds, the ſeeds of goodneſs being caſt therein will undiſturbedly grow and thrive; then the complexion being tender will eaſily be ſet into a right poſture: our ſoul is then a veſſel empty and ſweet; good liquor therefore may be inſtilled, which will both fit it and ſeaſon it with a durable tincture; the extreme curioſity and huge credulity of that age, as they greedily will ſwallow any, ſo will they admit good inſtruction. If we do then imbibe falſe conceptions, or have bad impreſſions made on our minds, it will be hard afterwards to expel, or to correct them [u]. Paſſion is then very fluid and moveable, but, not being impetuouſly determined any way, may eaſily be derived into the right channel. Then the quickneſs of our wit, the briſkneſs of our fancy, the freſhneſs of our memory, the vigour of our affections, the luſty and active

[t] Natura tenaciſſimi ſumus eorum, quæ rudibus annis percipimus, &c. *Quint.* i. 1.

Difficulter eraditur quod rudes animi perbiberunt. *Hier. ad Lætam.*

[u] Ut corpora ad quoſdam membrorum flexus formari niſi tenera non poſſunt, ſic animos ad pleraque duriores robur ipſum facit. *Quint.* ib.

Quo ſemel eſt imbuta recens ſervabit odorem
Teſta diu. *Hor. Ep.* i. 2.

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mettle of our ſpirits, being applied to virtuous ſtudies and endeavours, will produce moſt noble fruits; the beauty of which will adorn us, the ſweetneſs will pleaſe us, ſo as to leave on our minds a perpetual reliſh and ſatisfaction in goodneſs [x]. Then, being leſs encumbered with the cares, leſs entangled in the perplexities, leſs expoſed to the temptations of the world and ſecular affairs, we can more eaſily ſet forth, we may proceed more expeditely in good courſes. Then, being void of that ſtinging remorſe, which doth adhere to reflections upon paſt follies and miſſpent time, with more courage and alacrity we may proſecute good undertakings; then, beginning ſo ſoon to embrace virtue, we ſhall have advantage with more leiſure and more eaſe to poliſh and perfect it through our enſuing courſe of life; ſetting out ſo early, in the very morning of our age, without much ſtraining, marching on ſoftly and fairly, we may go through our journey to happineſs. SERM. VIII.

Our actions then are the firſt fruits of our life, which therefore are fit and due ſacrifices to our Maker; which if we do withdraw, we ſhall have nothing left ſo worthy or acceptable to preſent unto him. Will it be ſeemly to offer him the dregs and refuſe of our age? ſhall we not be aſhamed to bring a crazy temper of body and ſoul, dry bones, and decayed ſenſes, a dull fancy, a treacherous memory, a ſluggiſh ſpirit before him? ſhall we then, when we are fit for little, begin to undertake his ſervice? with our decrepit limbs and waſted ſtrength ſhall we ſet ourſelves to *run the ways of his commandments?*

As it is uncomfortable to think of being parſimonious, when our ſtock is almoſt gone; ſo it is to become thrifty of our life, when it comes near the bottom. Δεινὴ ἐνὶ πυθμενὶ φειδώ.

If we keep innocency, ſpend our youth well, it

[x] Ἥδη γὰρ ὅτι χαλεπὸν ἡ πόστις, ὅτι εὑρέσιμον, ὅτι εὐεξαπάτητον, ὅτι εὐάλωτον, καὶ σφοδρότερα δεῖ χαλινοῦ. *Chryſ.* ἀνδρ. ά.

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SERM. VIII. will yield unexpreſſible comfort to us; it will ſave us much ſorrow, it will prevent many inconveniences to us: if we have ſpent it ill, it will yield us great diſpleaſure, it will coſt us much pains; we ſhall be forced ſadly to bewail our folly and vanity therein; it will be bitter to ſee, that we muſt unlive our former life, and undo all we have done; that we muſt renounce the principles we have avowed, we muſt root out the habits we have planted, we muſt forſake the paths which we have beaten and ſo long trod in, if ever we will be happy; it will be grievous to us, when we come with penitential regret to deprecate, *Lord, remember not the ſins of my youth*; we ſhall feel ſore pain, when *our bones are full of the ſins of our youth*, and we come *to poſſeſs the iniquities thereof*.

Pſ. xxxvii. 38.

Pſ. xxv. 7. Job xx. 11. xiii. 26.

Lam. iii. 27.

It is therefore *good*, as the Prophet ſaith, *that a man bear the yoke in his youth*, when his neck is tender [y]; it is excellent advice which the Preacher giveth, *Remember thy Creator in the days of thy youth, while the evil days come not, and the years draw nigh, when thou ſhalt ſay, I have no pleaſure in them.*

Ariſtotle ſaith, that young men are not *fit hearers of moral doctrine*, becauſe, ſaith he, *they are unexperienced in affairs of life*; and *becauſe they are apt to follow their paſſions, which indiſpoſe to hear with fruit or profit* [z]. But his concluſion is falſe, and his reaſons may be well turned againſt him; for becauſe young men want experience, therefore is there no bad prejudice, no contrary habit to obſtruct their embracing ſound doctrine; becauſe their paſſions are vehement and ſtrong, therefore being rightly ordered, and ſet upon good objects, they with great force will carry

[y] Fingit equum tenera docilem cervice Magiſter
Ire viam, quam monſtrat eques. *Hor. Ep.* xii. 1.

[z] Τῆς πολιτικῆς οὐκ ἔστιν οἰκεῖος ἀκροατὴς ὁ νέος· ἄπειρος γὰρ τῶν κατὰ τὸν βίον πράξεων· ἔτι τοῖς παθήσιν ἀκολουθητικὸς ὢν ματαίως ἀκούσεται καὶ ἀνωφελῶς. *Eth.* i. 3.

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them to virtuous practice: that indeed is the beſts time to regulate and tame paſſions; as horſes muſt be broken when they are colts, dogs muſt be made when they are whelps, elſe they will never be brought to any thing. The Poet therefore adviſed better than the Philoſopher: SERM. VIII.

——nunc adbibe puro
Pectore verba puer, nunc te melioribus offer; Hor. Ep. i. 2.

and St. Paul plainly doth confute him, when he biddeth parents to *educate their children in the nurture and admonition of the Lord*; when he chargeth Titus, that he *exhort young men to be ſober-minded*; when he commendeth Timothy, for that he had ἀπὸ βρέφους, *from his infancy known the holy Scriptures*; ſo doth the Pſalmiſt, when he ſaith, *Wherewith ſhall a young man cleanſe his way? by taking heed according to thy word.* And Solomon, when he declareth that his moral precepts did ſerve *to give ſubtlety to the ſimple, to the young man knowledge and diſcretion*; when he biddeth us to *train up a child in the way he ſhould go.* St. Peter doth intimate the ſame, when he biddeth us *as new-born babes to deſire the ſincere milk of the word*; and our Saviour, when he ſaid, *Suffer little children to come unto me, for of ſuch is the kingdom of God*; that is, the more ſimplicity and innocence a man is endued with, the more apt he is to embrace and comply with the evangelical doctrine. Ariſtotle therefore was out, when he would exclude young men from the ſchools of virtue. It is obſervable that he contradicteth himſelf; for Οὐ μικρὸν διαφέρει τὸ ἔτως ἢ ἔτως, εὐθὺς ἐκ νέων ἐθίζεσθαι, ἀλλὰ πάμπολυ, μᾶλλον δὲ τὸ πᾶν. *It is*, ſaith he, *of no ſmall concernment to be from youth accuſtomed thus or thus; yea, 'tis very much, or rather all.* And how ſhall a young man be accuſtomed to do well, if he be not allowed to learn what is to be done? Eph. vi. 4. Tit. ii. 6. 2 Tim. ii. 22. 2 Tim. iii. 15. Pſal. cxix. 9. Prov. i. 4. Prov. xxii. 6. 15. 1 Pet. ii. 2. Luke xviii. 16. Eth. ii. 2.

Again; are we old? it is then high time to begin; we have then leſs time to ſpare from our moſt im-

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SERM. VIII. portant buſineſs; we ſtand then in moſt imminent danger, upon the edge of perdition, and ſhould therefore be nimble to ſkip out thence; our forces being diminiſhed, our quickneſs and induſtry ſhould be increaſed; the later we ſet out, the more ſpeed it behoveth us to make. If we ſtay, we ſhall grow continually more indiſpoſed and unfit to amend; it will be too late, when utter decrepitneſs and dotage have ſeized upon us, and our body doth ſurvive our ſoul [a]. When ſo much of our time, of our parts, of our ſtrength, are fled, we ſhould huſband the reſt to beſt advantage, and make the beſt ſatisfaction we can unto God, and unto our ſouls, with the remainder.

This age hath ſome peculiar advantages, which we ſhould embrace: the froth of humours is then boiled out, the fervours of luſt are ſlacked, paſſions are allayed, appetites are flatted; ſo that then inclinations to ſin are not ſo violent, nor doth the enjoyment thereof ſo much gratify [b].

Long experience then hath diſcovered the vanity of all worldly things, and the miſchief of ill courſes; ſo that we can then hardly admire any thing, or be fond of enjoying what we have found unprofitable or hurtful.

Age is excuſed from compliance with the faſhions, and thence much exempted from temptations of the world; ſo that it may be good without obſtacle or oppoſition.

It is proper thereto to be grave and ſerious, and,

[a] Quod facere ſolent qui ſerius exeunt—calcar addamus. *Sen. Ep.* 68. 76. 19.

Apoc. iii. 2. Στήριξον τὰ λοιπὰ, ἃ μέλλει ἀποθανεῖν.

[b] ——non omnia grandior ætas
Quæ fugiamus habet— *Ovid.*

Ἡ μὲν γὰρ νεότης πελάγει προσοίκει μαινομένῳ, κυμάτων ἀγρίων, καὶ πνευμάτων χείμωνι πονηρῶν· ἡ δὲ πολιὰ ὥσπερ εἰς λιμένα ἀκύμαντον τὰς τῶν γήρᾳ κότων ὁρμίζει ψυχὰς, παρέχουσα τῇ παρὰ τῆς ἡλικίας ἐντρυφᾶν ἀσφαλείᾳ. *Chryſ.* tom. vi. *Orat.* 38.

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consequently, to be virtuous; for gravity without virtue, and seriousness about vain things, are ridiculous. SERM. VIII.

Nothing doth so adorn this age as goodness, nothing doth so disgrace it as wickedness; *The hoary head is a crown of glory, if it be found in the way of righteousness*; but it is a mark of infamy, if it be observed proceeding in a course of iniquity; it signifieth that experience hath not improved it; it argueth incorrigible folly, or rather incurable madness therein. Prov. xvi. 31.

There is indeed no care, no employment proper for old men, but to prepare for their dissolution; to be bidding adieu to the world, with its vain pomps and mischievous pleasures; to be packing up their goods, to be casting their accounts, to be fitting themselves to abide in that state, into which they are tumbling; to appear at that bar, before which suddenly nature will set them. As a ship, which hath long been tossed and weather-beaten, which is shattered in its timber, and hath lost much of its rigging, should do nothing in that case but work toward the port, there to find its safety and ease; so should a man, who, having passed many storms and agitations of the world, is grievously battered and torn with age, strive only to die well, to get safe into the harbour of eternal rest. In freto vivimus, moriamur in portu. *Sen. Ep.* 19.

In fine, Epicurus himself said well, that *no man is either immature or over-ripe in regard to his soul's health*; we can never set upon it too soon, we should never think it too late to begin[c]; to live well is always the best thing we can do, and therefore we should at any time endeavour it; there are common reasons for all ages, there are special reasons for each age, which most strongly and most clearly do urge it; it is most

[c] Οὔτ' ἄωρος ἀδίς ἐστιν, οὔτε πάρωρος πρὸς τὸ κατὰ ψυχὴν ὑγιαῖνον. *Epic. ad Menœc.*

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SERM. VIII. ſeaſonable for young men, it is moſt neceſſary for old men, it is moſt adviſable for all men[d].

Again; be our condition what it will, this advice is reaſonable: are we in health? we owe God thanks for that excellent gift; and the beſt gratitude we can expreſs is, the improving it for his ſervice and our own good: we ſhould not loſe the advantage of a ſeaſon ſo fit for our obedience and repentance; while the forces of our body and mind are entire, while we are not diſcompoſed by pain or faintneſs, we ſhould ſtrive to diſpatch this needful work, for which infirmity may diſable us.

Are we ſick? it is then time to conſider our frailty, and the beſt we can to obviate the worſt conſequences thereof: it is then very fit, when we do feel the ſad effects of ſin, to endeavour the prevention of worſe miſchiefs that may follow; it is ſeaſonable, when we lie under God's correcting hand, to ſubmit unto him, to deprecate his wrath, to ſeek reconciliation with him by all kinds of obedience ſuitable to that ſtate; with ſerious reſolutions to amend hereafter, if it ſhall pleaſe God to reſtore us; it is moſt adviſable, when we are in the borders of death, to provide for that ſtate which lieth juſt beyond it.

Are we rich and proſperous? 'tis expedient then preſently to amend, leſt our wealth do ſoon corrupt us with pride, with luxury, with ſloth, with ſtupidity; leſt our proſperity become an inevitable ſnare, an irrecoverable bane unto us.

Prov. i. 32.

Are we poor or afflicted? 'tis then alſo needful to repent quickly, that we may have a comfortable ſupport for our ſoul, and a certain ſuccour in our diſtreſs; that we may get a treaſure to ſupply our want, a joy to drown our ſorrow, a buoy to keep

[d] Quare juventus, imo omnis ætas (neque enim rectæ voluntati ſerum eſt tempus ullum) totis mentibus huc tendamus, in hoc elaboremus; forſan et conſummare contingat. *Quint.* xii. 1.

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our hearts from ſinking into deſperation and diſcon- SERM.
ſolateneſs. This condition is a medicine, which God VIII.
adminiſtereth for our ſoul's health; if it do not work
preſently ſo as to do us good, it will prove both grievous and hurtful to us.

13. Laſtly, we may conſider, that, abating all the rueful conſequences of abiding in ſin, abſtracting from the deſperate hazards it expoſeth us to in regard to the future life, it is moſt reaſonable to abandon it, betaking ourſelves to a virtuous courſe of practice. For virtue in itſelf is far more eligible than vice; to keep God's commandments hath much greater convenience than to break them; the life of a good man, in all conſiderable reſpects, is highly to be preferred above the life of a bad man: for what is virtue, but a way of living that advanceth our nature into a ſimilitude with God's moſt excellent and happy nature[e]; that promoteth our true benefit and intereſt; that procureth and preſerveth health, eaſe, ſafety, liberty, peace, comfortable ſubſiſtence, fair repute, tranquillity of mind, all kinds of convenience to us? To what ends did our moſt benign and moſt wiſe Maker deſign and ſuit his law, but to the furthering our good, and ſecuring us from miſchief, as not only himſelf hath declared, but reaſon ſheweth, and experience doth atteſt? What is vice but a ſort of practice, which debaſeth and diſparageth us, which plungeth us into grievous evils, which bringeth diſtemper of body and ſoul, diſtreſs of fortune, danger, trouble, reproach, regret, and numberleſs inconveniences upon us; which, for no other reaſon than becauſe it ſo hurteth and grieveth us, was by our loving Creator interdicted to us? Virtue is moſt noble and worthy, moſt lovely, moſt profitable, moſt pleaſant, moſt creditable; vice is moſt ſordid and baſe, ugly, hurtful, bitter, diſgraceful in itſelf, and in its

Deut. x. 13. Mic. vi. 8. Neh. ix. 13. Rom. vii. 12. Pſ. xix. 9. cxix. 107.

[e] Eſt virtus nihil aliud quam in ſe perfecta, et ad ſummum perducta natura. *Cic. de Leg.* 1.

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SERM. VIII. conſequences. If we compare them together, we ſhall find that virtue doth always preſerve our health, but vice commonly doth impair it; that virtue improveth our eſtate, vice waſteth it; that virtue adorneth our reputation, vice blemiſheth it; that virtue ſtrengtheneth our parts, vice weakeneth them; that virtue maintaineth our freedom, vice enſlaveth us; that virtue keepeth our mind in order and peace, vice diſcompoſeth and diſquieteth it; virtue breedeth ſatisfaction and joy, vice ſpawneth diſpleaſure and anguiſh of conſcience: to enter therefore into a virtuous courſe of life, what is it but to embrace happineſs? to continue in vicious practice, what is it but to ſtick in miſery?

By entering into good life, we enter into the favour and friendſhip of God, engaging his infinite power and wiſdom for our protection, our ſuccour, our direction and guidance; enjoying the ſweet effluxes of his mercy and bounty; we therewith become friends to the holy angels and bleſſed ſaints; to all good men, being united in a holy and happy conſortſhip of judgment, of charity, of hope, of devotion with them: we become friends to all the world, which we oblige by good wiſhes, and good deeds, and by the influence of good example: we become friends to ourſelves, whom we thereby enrich and adorn with the beſt goods; whom we gratify and pleaſe with the choiceſt delights: but perſiſting in ſin, we continue to affront, wrong, and diſpleaſe our Maker, to be diſloyal toward our ſovereign Lord, to be ungrateful toward our chief benefactor, to diſoblige the beſt friend we have, to provoke a moſt juſt and ſevere judge, to cope with omnipotency, to contradict infallibility, to enrage the greateſt patience, to abuſe immenſe goodneſs: we thereby become enemies to all the world; to God, whom we injure and diſhonour; to the friends of God, whom we deſert and oppoſe; to the creatures, which we abuſe to our pride, luſt, and vanity; to our neigh-

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neighbours, whom we corrupt or ſeduce; to our- SER. VII.
ſelves, whom we bereave of the beſt goods, and betray to the worſt evils.

Beginning to live ſoberly, we begin to live like men, following the conduct of reaſon; beginning to live in charity, we commence the life of angels, enjoying in ourſelves moſt ſweet content, and procuring great benefit to others; but going on in ſinful voluptuouſneſs, we proceed to live like beaſts, wholly guided by ſenſe, and ſwayed by appetite; being pertinacious in malice, we continue to be like fiends, working torment in ourſelves, and miſchief to our neighbours.

Embracing virtue we become wiſe and ſober men, worthy and honourable, beneficial and uſeful to the world; but continuing in vice, we continue to be fooliſh and vain, to be vile and deſpicable, to be worthleſs and uſeleſs.

By our delay to amend, what do we gain? what, but a little flaſhy and tranſient pleaſure, inſtead of a ſolid and durable peace; but a little counterfeit profit, inſtead of real wealth; but a little ſmoke of deceitful opinion, inſtead of unqueſtionably ſound honour; ſhadows of imaginary goods, inſtead of thoſe which are moſt ſubſtantial and true, a good mind, the love of God, the aſſured welfare of our ſouls. But this field of diſcourſe is too ſpacious; I ſhall only therefore for concluſion ſay, that ſpeedily applying ourſelves to obedience, and breaking off our ſins by repentance, is in effect nothing elſe but, from a preſent hell in trouble, and the danger of a final hell in torment, to be tranſlated into a double heaven; one of joyful tranquillity here, another of bliſsful reſt hereafter; unto the which Almighty God in his mercy bring us all, through Jeſus Chriſt our Lord; to whom for ever be all glory and praiſe. *Amen.*

The very God of peace ſanctify you wholly; and I pray 1 Theſſ. v. *God your whole ſpirit, and ſoul, and body, be preſerved* 23. *blameleſs unto the coming of our Lord Jeſus Chriſt. Amen.*

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SERMON IX.

No Reſpect of Perſons with God.

ROM. ii. 11.

For there is no reſpect of perſons with God.

IT is an ordinary conceit, grounded on a ſuperficial view of things, that Almighty God diſpenſeth his gifts with great inequality, and dealeth very partially with men; being laviſh in his bounty to ſome, but ſparing therein to others; ſlack and indulgent in calling ſome to account, but rigorous and ſevere in judgment toward others. SERM. IX.

Which imagination often hath influence upon the affections and the actions of men; ſo that hence ſome men do highly preſume, others are much diſcouraged: ſome are apt to boaſt themſelves ſpecial darlings and favourites of heaven; others are tempted to complain of their being quite deſerted, or neglected thereby. Pſal. lxxiii. 6.

But whoever more carefully will obſerve things, and weigh them with good conſideration, ſhall find this to be a great miſtake; and that in truth God diſtributeth his favours with very equal meaſures: he poiſeth the ſcales of juſtice with a moſt even hand; ſo that reaſonably no man ſhould be exalted; no man ſhould be dejected in mind, upon account of any Job xxxi. 6.

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SERM. IX. any conſiderable difference in God's regard towards him, and other perſons; the which is clearly diſcovered by God, or merely dependeth on his will and providence.

The advantages, which one man hath above another, being eſtimated morally, in reference to ſolid felicity and content, are indeed none; or are not abſolutely made by God, but framed by men unto themſelves. For

God is indifferently affected toward perſons as ſuch, nakedly and privately conſidered; or as diveſted of moral conditions, qualifications, and actions; he in his dealing, whether as benefactor or judge, purely conſidereth the reaſon and exigency of things, the intrinſic worth of perſons, the real merits of each cauſe; he maketh no arbitrary or groundleſs diſcriminations; he neither loveth and favoureth, nor loatheth and diſcountenanceth any perſon unaccountably: he doth utterly diſclaim partiality, or reſpect of perſons, as a calumnious aſperſion on him, and a ſcandal to his providence.

Such in holy Scriptures he repreſenteth himſelf, upon various occaſions; declaring his perfect impartiality, and that nothing beſide the right and reaſon of caſes doth ſway with him; all other conſiderations being impertinent and inſignificant to him. For inſtance,

It is declared, that he hath no partial reſpect to nations; for the piety of Job, an Edomite; of Melchiſedeck, a Canaanite; of Jethro, a Midianite; were very pleaſing to him: he favourably did hear the prayers and accept the alms of Cornelius, a Roman ſoldier; whereupon St. Peter made this general reflection: *Of a truth I perceive that God is no reſpecter of perſons; but in every nation he that feareth him, and worketh righteouſneſs, is accepted with him.*

(Rom. x. 12. iii. 29.)

Acts x. 34, 35.

He is declared not to regard the external profeſſion of true religion, but real practice according to it: *He rendereth,* ſaith St. Paul, *to every man according*

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ing to his deeds——tribulation and anguiſh upon every SERM.
ſoul of man that doeth evil, of the Jew firſt, and alſo of IX.
the Gentile; but glory, honour, and peace to every man ———
that worketh good, to the Jew firſt, and alſo to the Gen- (Gal. v. 6. vi. 15. iii. 28.)
tile; for, addeth the Apoſtle, aſſigning the reaſon of this proceeding, *there is no reſpect of perſons with God.* Col. iii. 11. Rom. ii. 6. 9, 10, 11. (x. 12. iii. 29.)

He is ſaid not *to reſpect faces,* or any exterior appearances, however ſpecious in the eye of the world; according to that ſaying of God to Samuel, at the choice of David before his brethren: *Look not on his countenance, or on the height of his ſtature, becauſe I have refuſed him: for the Lord ſeeth not as man ſeeth; for man looketh on the outward appearance; but the Lord looketh on the heart.* 1 Sam. xvi. 7.

It is expreſſed, that he hath no reſpect to the outward eſtate, or worldly rank and dignity of men; but that princes and peaſants, maſters and ſervants, the honourable or wealthy, and the mean or poor, are of equal conſideration with him; *He,* ſaith Job, *accepteth not the perſons of princes, nor regardeth the rich more than the poor; for they are all the work of his hands;* and St. Paul biddeth maſters to deal fairly with their ſervants, *knowing,* ſaith he, *that your maſter is alſo in heaven; neither is there reſpect of perſons with him.* Job xxxiv. 19. Sap. vi. 7. Epheſ. vi. 9. Coloſſ. iii. 25. iv. 1.

We are taught, that he doth not regard even the moſt ſacred offices, or more worthy accompliſhments of men, in prejudice to the verity of things, or equity of the caſe; for hence St. Paul maintaineth his reſolute behaviour toward thoſe great pillars of religion, St. Peter and St. James; *Of thoſe who ſeemed to be ſomewhat, whatſoever they were, it maketh no matter to me: God accepteth no man's perſon.* Gal. ii. 6.

It is frequently inculcated, that he hath no conſideration of any gifts, of ſacrifices, of ſervices preſented to him with ſiniſter intent, to compound for ſin, or excuſe from duty, to pervert juſtice, or palliate wrong; according to that declaration of Moſes, *The Lord your God is God of Gods, and Lord of Lords,* Deut. x. 17.

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a great God, a mighty and a terrible, which regardeth not persons, nor taketh reward; and that] charge of king Jehoshaphat to his judges, *Let the fear of the Lord be upon you; take heed, and do it; for there is no iniquity with the Lord our God, nor respect of persons, nor taking of gifts.* And, *Do not think*, saith the Hebrew wise man, *to corrupt* (him) *with gifts; for such he will not receive; and trust not to unrighteous sacrifices; for the Lord is judge, and with him is no respect of persons.*

2 Chron. xix. 7. Ecclus. xxxv. 12. (Isa. i. 3. lxi. 8. lxvi. 3.) Prov. xv. 8. xxi. 27. Amos v. 21, 22. Jer. vi. 20. Mic. vi. 7, 8. Hos. vi. 6. Rom. ii. 11. Col. iii. 25. 1 Pet. i. 17.

In fine, it is often generally declared, that God impartially dispenseth recompences, in just proportion, according to the deeds of men: *He*, saith St. Paul, *that doeth wrong, shall receive for the wrong which he hath done, and there is no respect of persons: And if*, saith St. Peter, *ye call upon the Father, who without respect of persons judgeth according to every man's work, pass the time of your sojourning here in fear.*

There is nothing more frequently asserted, or more seriously urged in holy Scripture, than this point, that God will judge and deal with men, not according to his absolute, antecedent affections, but *according to their own works*, or the tenor of their practice, duly scanned and estimated by the rules of justice; so that the really better man will certainly prove the happier, and the worse man shall be the more wretched: *He will reward every man*, saith our Lord, κατὰ τὴν πρᾶξιν αὐτῦ, *according to his practice: Every one*, saith St. Paul, *shall receive the things done in his body*, πρὸς τὰ ἔργα, *suitably* (in just proportion) *to his works*; and *each man shall receive* ἴδιον μισθὸν, *his own wages according to his own labour*; and *then praise* (or a due taxation) *shall be to every man from God: Behold*, saith he in the Revelation, *I come quickly, and my reward is with me, to recompense each man* ὡς τὸ αὐτῦ ἔργον ἔσαι, *as his work shall be.*

Matth. xvi. 27. Rom. ii. 6. Apoc. ii. 23. xx. 12. 2 Cor. v. 10. 1 Cor. iii. 8. (Jer. xvii. 10. xxxii. 19. Psal. lxii. 12.) 1 Cor. iv. 5. Apoc. xxii. 12. Ἀποδῶναι ἑκάστῳ.

Wherefore by sacred testimonies it is abundantly manifest, that impartiality is a divine attribute and perfection of God; the which (for our greater satisfaction, and farther illustration of the point) may be also

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also evinced by divers arguments, some proving that it must be so, others shewing that it is so; some inferring it *a priori*, from the prime, most avowed attributes of God's nature, and from his relations to men; others arguing it *a posteriori*, from principal instances of God's proceedings and providential dispensations toward men.

Of the first sort are these:

1. God is impartial, because he is perfectly wise, and thence doth truly estimate persons and things.

Wisdom doth look evenly, with a free and pure (an indifferent and uncorrupt) eye upon all things; apprehending and esteeming each as it is in itself; making no distinction where it findeth none; not preferring one thing before another, without ground of difference in them. It doth not fix a valuation on its objects, but acknowledgeth it, and taketh it for such as it is in themselves.

Wherefore God cannot have any blind affection or fondness toward any person grounded on no reason, or upon any unaccountable prejudice. No person can seem amiable or odious to him, who is not in himself truly such.

This argument is often used in Scripture; and to assure us of this truth, it is there frequently affirmed, that God doth search the hearts, doth try the spirits, doth weigh the actions of men: *The Lord*, said Hannah, *is a God of knowledge, and by him actions are weighed: All the ways of man*, saith Solomon, *are clean in his own eyes; but the Lord weigheth the spirits: His eyes*, saith the Psalmist, *behold, his eye-lids try the children of men:* And, *O Lord of hosts*, saith Jeremiah, *that judgest righteously, that triest the reins and the heart——Thine eyes are open upon all the ways of the sons of men, to give every one according to his ways, and according to the fruit of his doings:* [*I the Lord search the heart, I try the reins, to give every man according to his ways, and according to the fruit of his doings.*]

1 Sam. ii. 3. Prov. xvi. 2. Psal. xi. 4. Jer. xi. 20. xx. 12. Jer. xxxii. 19. Jer. xvii. 10.

2. God cannot be partial, because he is perfectly righteous,

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SERM. IX. righteous, just, and holy. This reason adjoined to the former doth make up a complete demonstration: for partiality doth proceed either from blindness of mind, or from perverseness of will; he, therefore, who hath both an exact knowledge of things, and a perfect rectitude of will, can nowise be partial; the one enabling him to judge, the other disposing him to affect things as they are and deserve; to esteem and love that which is indeed worthy and lovely; to despise and dislike that which is despicable and odious; to have no opinion or affection toward a person abstracted from all qualifications; such an one being no special object of a wise and just either esteem or contempt, love or hatred.

As these causes are always inseparably connected (for what is justness, but a disposition of will to follow, without deflection, the dictates of wisdom?) so the effect must necessarily follow; according to numberless testimonies in Scripture, importing, that *The righteous Lord loveth righteousness; but the wicked, and him that loveth violence, his soul hateth: The eyes of the Lord are upon the righteous*——but *the face of the Lord is against them that do evil.*

Psal. xi. 7. (vii. 11.) xxxiii. 5. xlv. 7. cxlvi. 8.) Psal. xi. 5. v. 5. Psal. xxxiv. 15, 16.

3. God is impartial, because he is infinitely great and potent; whence all creatures are in the same degree inferior, at the same distance remote from him; all are equally at his discretion and disposal; he hath no need of any: what therefore should incline him to regard one before another, excepting only goodness, wherein he delighteth? So the Wise Man discourseth, *He that is Lord of all shall fear no man's person, neither shall he stand in awe of any man's greatness; for he hath made the small and great, and careth for all alike.* So Moses did imply, *The Lord your God is God of Gods, and Lord of Lords, a great God, a mighty, and a terrible, which regardeth not persons.*

Sap. vi. 7. Deut. x. 17.

4. God is impartial, because he is immensely good and benign; both intensively in the degree, and extensively as to the objects of his goodness; so that he

Exod. xxiv. 6, 7. Numb. xiv. 18.

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he favoureth all equally, because all thoroughly, so SERM. far as may well be according to their condition and IX. capacity; whence if there be any difference or defect, the ground thereof is not in his nature or will, but in the different qualifications of creatures. Ps. lxxxvi. 5. cxlv. 8. ciii. 8.

There is a double goodness or love of God; one absolute, preceding all regard to personal qualities, or deeds; the other conditionate, and consequent on special regards: in both these God is impartial; for the first is general and unconfined, according to that of the Psalmist, *The Lord is good to all, and his mercies are over all his works*; and those sayings in the Gospel, *He is kind unto the unthankful and to the evil: He maketh his sun to rise on the evil and on the good; and sendeth rain on the just and on the unjust.* Ps. cxlv. 9. 16. Luke vi. 35. Matth. v. 45.

The second is grounded on special reasons of the case, and adapted to the rules of justice demanding it; according whereto, *The Lord is rich* (in mercy) *toward all that call upon him. He will fulfil the desire of them that fear him*, and *preserveth all them that love him.* Rom. x. 12. Ps. cxlv. 18. xxxiv. 15. cxlv. 19, 20.

In the first there is no difference; in the second the difference is made by ourselves; being founded in our voluntary demeanor. xxxiv. 9. xxxiii. 18.

5. God is impartial toward all persons, because he hath the same (natural and original) relations toward all.

1. He is the maker and father of all; according to that of the Prophet, *Have we not all one father? Hath not one God created us?* and that of the Apostle, There is *One God and father of all, who is above all, and through all, and in you all:* he therefore hath the same parental kindness towards all, the same tenderness for the good of each; he is not capable of that imperfection, which is observable in some parents, to be fond and indulgent to some children above others; but in his affection, *The rich and poor*, as the Wise Man saith, *do meet together; the Lord is the maker of them all.* Mal. ii. 10. Ephes. iv. 6. Prov. xxii. 2.

Hence Job did collect that *God accepteth not the persons* Job xxxiv. 19.

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SERM. IX. *persons of princes, nor regardeth the rich more than the poor; for,* saith he, *they are all the work of his hands.*

Job xxxi. 13, 14, 15. Hence the same holy man did infer, that he was obliged to deal fairly with his own servants, for that God in judgment would consider their case no less

Job xxxi. 15. than his, upon this account, for *Did not he that made me in the womb, make him? and did not one fashion us in the womb?*

Hence the Wise Man, who imitated Solomon, did argue an equality of gracious providence toward all;

Sap. vi. 7. *He hath made the small and the great, and careth for all alike.*

2. God is the common Lord of all; and therefore is concerned to protect all with the like care, to govern all with the same equity.

Hence St. Paul gathered, that God is indifferently willing to shew mercy and dispense blessings to all people; to confer the means of salvation, and to accept pious endeavours, without distinction of Jew or

Rom. iii. 29. Gentile; *Is he,* saith he, *the God of the Jews only? Is*

Rom. x. 12. *he not also of the Gentiles?* And, *There is therefore no difference between the Jew and the Greek; for the same Lord over all is rich unto all that call upon him.*

Hence the same Apostle doth urge masters to be just and kind to their servants; for that God, as the common master, hath an equal respect to both;

Ephes. vi. 9. *knowing that your master also is in heaven, and there is no respect of persons with him.*

1 Tim. iv. 10. ii. 3, 4. 3. God is *the Saviour of all*; desiring and designing

2 Pet. iii. 9. that *all men should be saved, and come to the knowledge of the truth*; being *willing that no man should perish, but that all should come to repentance.*

Wherefore out of philanthropy and love to mankind he sent his Son to be *the Saviour of the world*;

Tit. ii. 11. 1 John iv. 14. Luke ix. 56. John iii. 17. xii. 47. 2 Cor. v. 19. 1 Tim. ii. 6. Heb. ii. 9. to *give himself a ransom for all men*, to *taste death for every man.*

And what greater instance could there be of perfect impartiality?

So by reasons from the principal attributes and rela-

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relations of God his impartiality may be deduced: the same also may be declared from his proceedings and dealings with men. For, SERM. IX.

1. God hath proposed to all men indifferently the same terms and conditions of gaining his love and favour, of enjoying his bounty and mercy, of obtaining rewards and felicity from him. *Clem. Paed.* l. 4.

The same laws and rules of life are prescribed to all persons, as men, and as Christians.

The natural dictates of reason, the precepts of holy Scripture, the great moral duties of religion, by observance whereof God's favour is retained, and salvation assured, are of general concern and common obligation to all without exception.

God hath not framed one Law, or one Gospel, for princes and great men, another for peasants and mean artisans; he hath not chalked out one way toward heaven for the rich, another for the poor to walk in; but all, *high and low, rich and poor, one with another*, are tied to observe the precepts of piety, of charity, of justice, of temperance, sobriety and chastity, of modesty, humility, and patience; none, great or small, can otherwise, than by proceeding in the common road of virtuous practice, arrive to happiness. *He that doeth the will of my Father that is in heaven, shall enter into the kingdom of heaven.* Psal. xlix. 2. Matth. vii. 21.

If thou wilt enter into life, keep the commandments: Enter in through the strait gate: Blessed are they that do his commandments, that they may have right to the tree of life: To them, who by patient continuance in well-doing seek glory and honour and immortality, eternal life will be conferred: these are the grand infallible maxims, the fixed irreversible decrees, expressing the general duty and doom of mankind, according to the eternal reason of things, and the declared will of God Almighty, our sovereign Governor and Judge. Matth. xix. 17. Matth. vii. 13. Luke xiii. 24. Psal. xxxiv. 12. Apoc. xxii. 14. Rom. ii. 7.

Whoever it is, that will please God, that will have his love, that will be happy by his grace, must humbly John xv. 14.

SERM. IX. bly submit to God's will, must faithfully obey God's laws, must carefully walk in God's way; from this course there can be no exemption, no dispensation, no special privilege for any person whatever.

As all men naturally, by indissoluble bands of obligation, are the subjects and servants of God; so God indispensably and inexcusably doth require the same loyalty and fidelity, the same diligence, the same reverence from all.

Great men sometimes may live, as if they conceited themselves free from the obligations which bind other men; as if they had not souls (as we poor mortals have) to be saved, or were to be saved in some other way; as if obedience to the divine laws doth not touch them, but only doth belong to the commonalty; as if they had special indulgence to live in pride, luxury, and sloth, might warrantably practise injustice, oppression, revenge; might *cum privilegio* be lewd and lascivious, withhold their debts, take God's name in vain, neglect devotion and the service of God: but in thus doing they much abuse themselves; for they no less than others are obnoxious to guilt and to punishment, for such misdemeanours against the divine laws. In truth, if there be any difference in the case, it is only this; that they, in all equity, ingenuity, and gratitude, are obliged to a more strict, more faithful, more diligent observance of God's laws; they being more indebted to God for his special bounty to them; they having larger talents and advantages committed to their trust, their deportment being of higher consequence, and most influential on the world, they being liable to render an account according to that just rule, *Unto whom much is given, of him much shall be required*; whence their eminency of condition doth not excuse them from common duties, but doth advance their obligation, will aggravate their neglect, will inflame their reckoning, will plunge them

Luke xii. 48.

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them deeper into woful punishment; according to that of the Wise Man, *A sharp judgment shall be to them that are in high places; for mercy will soon pardon the meanest, but mighty men shall be mightily tormented.* SERM. IX. Sap. vi. 5, 6.

2. All persons have the same means, the same aids, the same supports afforded to them, for ability to perform their duty, and attain their happiness.

The word of God, as the light of heaven, doth indifferently shine to all men, for instructing their minds, for directing their practice, for *guiding their feet in the way of peace.*

The divine grace is ever at hand, ready to assist all those, who sincerely and seriously do apply themselves to serve God.

Seasonable comforts are never wanting to support those who need them, and who in their distress seek them from God, who *healeth the broken in heart, and bindeth up their wounds*; so that when *the poor man crieth, the Lord heareth him, and saveth him out of his troubles.* Psal. cxlvii. 3. (cxlvi. 7.) Psal. xxxiv. 6.

The universal good Spirit of God (the fountain of light and wisdom, of spiritual power and strength, of consolation and joy) is communicated according to the needs of men, and exigences of occcasion; preventing them by direction to the right way, by reclaiming them from ill courses, by exciting in them good thoughts and good desires; quickening their good resolutions, and assisting in the pursuit of them; enabling them to resist temptations, and to combat with their spiritual adversaries; to such best purposes the holy Spirit is given to all in needful seasons and measures; especially to those who do earnestly seek it, do faithfully use it, do treat it well. 1 Cor. xii. 7. Luke xi. 13.

3. God hath provided, and doth propose to all men the same encouragements for obedience, the same punishments for transgression; the which being the same in kind do only differ in degree, proportionably to the good deeds or bad demerits of persons.

God hath appointed one heaven for all pious and

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SERM. IX. virtuous persons, of what nation, of what rank, of what condition soever they are; he hath *prepared those things, which eye hath not seen, nor ear heard, nor*
1 Cor. ii. 9. *heart of man conceived, for all that love him.* For *all*
2 Tim. iv. 7, 8. that have *fought the good fight*, and *kept the faith*, and *love his appearance, the Lord, the righteous Judge, hath laid up a crown of righteousness.*

Immortality of life, an unfading crown of glory, a
Luke xxii. 29. kingdom that cannot be shaken, unspeakable joys, endless bliss, God hath covenanted and promised to all his faithful servants; to all who in his way please
Apoc. xxii. 17. to accept and embrace them, ὁ θέλων, *He that willeth, let him take of the water of life freely:* and what greater rewards could there be assigned? What room is there for partiality, where all are capable of the same equally great, because in a manner immense felicity?
Matth. viii. 11. Luke xiii. 29. *Many*, saith our Saviour, *shall come from the east and from the west, and from the north, and from the south, and shall sit down with Abraham, and with Isaac, and with Jacob, in the kingdom of heaven.*

Lazarus, the poor beggar, shall rest with the illustrious Moses, and the noble Daniel, with David, and Hezekiah, and Josiah, and all pious princes in the bosom of Abraham. The poor fishermen, the painful tent-makers, the sorry publicans, shall reign together with Constantine, and Theodosius, and all those good princes, who have faithfully served God, and promoted his glory. The rich, well using their
1 Tim. vi. 19. Luke xii. 33. xvi. 9. wealth, may obtain that state, *treasuring up to themselves a good foundation against the time to come, that they may lay hold on eternal life:* the poor, contentedly bearing their condition, have a good title thereto,
Luke vi. 20. expressed in those words, *Blessed be ye poor, for yours is the kingdom of God.*

On the other hand, the same dismal punishments are threatened to all presumptuous, contumacious, and impenitent transgressors of God's law, however dignified or distinguished; be they princes or subjects, noble or base, wealthy or indigent; the same unquench-

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unquenchable fire, the same gnawing worm, the same weeping, and wailing, and gnashing of teeth; the same utter darkness; the same burning lake of brimstone; the same extreme disconsolate anguish, is reserved for them all: *Depart from me, Go ye cursed into everlasting fire*, will be the doom pronounced on *all the workers of iniquity*; *Indignation and wrath, tribulation and anguish, will be upon every soul that doth evil.* SERM. IX. Matth. vii. 23. xxv. 41. Luke xiii. 27. Rom. ii. 8, 9.

No regard will be had to the quality of men in this world; for *the rich man*, who *was clothed in purple and fine linen, and fared sumptuously every day*, was not excused from *hell* and *torment*: there is a *Tophet ordained of old, even for kings*; *mighty men shall be mightily tormented*, if they have mightily sinned. Luke xvi. 19. 23. Jam. v. 1. Luke vi. 24. Is. xxx. 33. Sap. vi. 6.

Even present encouragements of virtue in this life, the joys and comforts of God's holy Spirit, the sweet elapses of spiritual consolation in devotion, *the peace of God*, and delicious sense of his love, the cheerful satisfaction of a good conscience, the *joy in believing* God's truth, and hoping for accomplishment of his promises, the delight in obeying God's commandments, the blessing of God upon good undertakings, and happy success therein, the *cooperation of all things for good to them who love God*, the supply of all wants, and satisfaction of all desires, the experimental assurance of God's constant protection and gracious providence over those who fear him, and trust in him, (according to numberless declarations and promises in holy Scripture) are indifferently dispensed to all, who shall use the means to attain them, in way of conscientious practice. Ps. xxxvii. 4, 5. i. 3. Rom. viii. 28. Psal. cxlv. 19. xxxvii. 4. xxxiv. 10.

As correspondently the temporal discouragements from sin (crosses, disappointments, vexations, miseries) are without exception allotted to all transgressors of God's law, according to many denunciations therein. Psal. xi. 6. lxxiii. 19. xxxii. 10. Isa. xlviii. 22. lvii. 20. liv. 17.

4. The impartiality of God doth appear from his

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SERM. IX. universal providence, carefully watching over all and every perſon, diſpenſing good things to each, according to his need, without diſtinction [a].

Is any man in extreme want? his liberal hand preſently doth reach forth a ſupply; for *He ſatisfieth the longing ſoul, and filleth the hungry ſoul with goodneſs; He openeth his hand, and ſatisfieth the deſire of every living thing.*

Pſal. cvii. 9. Pſal. cxlv. 16.

Is any man in diſtreſs? the Lord is ready to afford relief; according to that repeated burthen of the 107th Pſalm: *Then they cry unto the Lord in their trouble, and he ſaveth them out of their diſtreſſes.*

Pſal. cvii. 6. 13. 19. 28. xxxiv. 6. cxlvi. 7. cxlvii. 6. ciii. 8. cvi. 8. 44. lxxviii. 38.

Is any man engaged in ſin and guilt? He is patient and long-ſuffering; not pouring forth his anger, not withholding his mercies; letting his ſun ariſe and his ſhowers deſcend upon the moſt unworthy and ingrateful: this he doth ſo generally, that commonly by apparent events it is not eaſily diſcernible, to whom God beareth ſpecial favour; according to that obſervation of the Preacher, *No man knoweth either love or hatred by all that is before them; all things* coming *alike to all.* How then can any man complain of partiality in him, who exerciſeth ſo unconfined bounty, clemency, and patience?

Eccl. ix. 1, 2.

If there be any conſiderable difference, it is only this, that God hath a peculiar care of the poor, the afflicted, the oppreſſed, the helpleſs and diſconſolate, who do moſt need (and thence are moſt induced to ſeek) his ſuccour and comfort; being alſo commonly better qualified to receive them; as is frequently declared in Scripture.

Pſal. cxlvi. 9. cxlvii. 14. ix. 9. xxxiv. 18. Iſa. xxv. 4.

It is true, that God hath his particular friends, his favourites, his privados, whom he doth ſpecially regard and countenance; upon whom he conferreth extraordinary boons and graces; namely, thoſe who do love, who do fear, who do truſt in, who do ho-

[a] Bonus omnipotens ita curat univerſos tanquam ſingulos, ita ſingulos tanquam ſolos. *Aug. Conf.*

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nour him, who do obey him; concerning whom it is said, *We know that all things work together for good to them that love God:* and *The Lord preserveth all those that love him: There is no want to them that fear him: He will fulfil the desire of them that fear him; he also will hear their cry, and will save them: The Lord redeemeth the soul of his servants, and none of them that trust in him shall be desolate: Them that honour me, I will honour: The Lord loveth the righteous: The eyes of the Lord are upon the righteous, and his ears are open unto their cry: Ye are my friends, if ye do whatsoever I command you.* SERM. IX. Rom. viii. 28. Psal. cxlv. 20. xxxi. 23. xxxiv. 9. cxlv. 19. xxxiv 22. 1 Sam. ii. 30. Psal. cxlvi. 8. xxxiv. 15. John xv. 14.

But evidently there is no partiality in this; for he doth not favour them irrespectively as persons, but as in justice specially qualified for favour, friendship, dutifulness, reverence toward him, being the highest virtues, and arguing a mind endued with dispositions (with equity, with ingenuity, with gratitude, with sober wisdom, with love of truth and goodness) which demand a correspondence of love and respect from God himself. And as we do not hold a man partial, who beareth a special affection and regard to those, who express good-will, who deal kindly and fairly with them, who serve them faithfully, and pay them due respect; so neither is God partial, if he doth specially bless good men upon the like accounts.

Especially considering, that God doth not so favour mere pretenders, who profess to love and honour him, but do not love true goodness; fond, superstitious, hypocritical people, who *call Lord, Lord,* but practise iniquity; who think to please him by affected services; who court and flatter him with their lips; who would bribe him with their gifts and sacrifices. Matt. vii. 22. Luke vi. 46. Tit. i. 16. Matt. xv. 9. Col. ii. 22. Matt. xv. 8.

5. All Christians, without distinction, have the same illustrious relations and honourable privileges, the most great and glorious that can be imagined.

Of what greater honour is a man capable, than to be

SERM. IX. be adopted into the blood royal of heaven, *to be called* to be one of the sons of God? *Ye are all the sons of God, by faith in Christ Jesus. God sent forth his Son, born of a woman, that he might redeem us*—and *that we might receive the adoption of sons.*

(Col. iii. 11.) 1 Cor. xii. 13. Gal. iii. 26. 28. iv. 4, 5. Rom. viii. 14. 1 John iii. 1. John i. 12. Gal. iv.

Ἴδετε ποταπὴν ἀγάπην· *Behold*, saith St. John, *what love the Father hath given us, that we should be called the sons of God.* This is a *privilege*, which God hath given, which Christ hath purchased for us all. And *whosoever received him*, he gave *them* ἐξουσίαν ταύτην, (this power, this privilege, this advantage) *that they should become the sons of God.*

To what higher dignity can any one pretend, than to be heir of a kingdom, by the most infallible assurance that can be; by covenant, by promise of God? Such are all good Christians, God's children; for *if sons, then heirs*, saith the Apostle, *heirs of God, coheirs with Christ:* heirs of God's kingdom; for, *Hearken, my beloved brethren*, saith St. James; *Hath not God chosen the poor of this world, rich in faith, and heirs of the kingdom, which he hath promised to them that love him?*

Rom. viii. 17. Gal. iv. 7. Tit. iii. 7. Heb. i. 14. Jam. ii. 5.

Matt. xxv. 34. *Inherit the kingdom prepared for you.*

Luke xii. 32. *Fear not, little flock; it is your Father's good pleasure to give you a kingdom.*

Luke xxii. 29. *I appoint unto you a kingdom, as my Father hath appointed unto me.*

To what higher pitch can the most ambitious soul aspire, than to be a king?

Rev. i. 6. 9. v. 10. 2 Tim. iv. 18. ἐπουράνιος. 2 Pet. i. 11. αἰώνιος. Heb. xii. 28. ἀσάλευτος. 1 Thess. ii. 12. Col. i. 13.

Such, St. John saith, that our Lord hath constituted every good Christian; *partakers*, not of a carnal, an earthly, a temporal kingdom, (which is unstable, is subject to various chances and crosses, cannot endure long, or last any considerable time,) but of a spiritual, a celestial, an eternal kingdom, *which cannot be shaken*; which hath continual rest, peace, joy.

We are by God *called unto* his kingdom and glory, —*translated into the kingdom of his own dear Son.*

To be the brethren of Christ; who is the sovereign

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vereign *Lord of glory, King of kings, and Lord of lords.* SERM. IX.

Is it not a considerable honour to be the friends of our Lord? So is every poor soul, which hath the conscience to serve him faithfully; for, *Ye are my friends, if ye do whatsoever I command you.* John xv. 14.

All are citizens, free denizens of the heavenly commonwealth; συμπολῖται τῶν ἁγίων—— Phil. iii. 20. Heb. xiii. 20. xii. 22.

6. All men are liable to the same judgment, at the same tribunal, before that one impartial, inflexible Judge, who cannot be corrupted with gifts, or dazzled with shews, or moved by any sinister regards. Eph. ii. 19. Deut. x. 17. (Col. iii. 25.)

All persons must stand before that bar upon equal ground; without any advantage; according to that representation of St. John; *I saw the dead, small and great, stand before God, and the books were opened— and the dead were judged out of those things which were written in the books, according to their works.* Apoc. xx. 12.

The greatest monarchs, the mightiest potentates, the most redoubtable warriors, and successful conquerors, (the *man, who made the earth to tremble, that did shake kingdoms,*) *that made the world as a wilderness, and destroyed the cities thereof*; who affected *to ascend into heaven, and to exalt his throne above the stars of God, to ascend above the heights of the clouds, and to be like the Most High.* Is. xiv. 16, 17. v. 13, 14. (v. 11.)

There shall they stand bare and divested of all their phantastry; their splendid pomp, their numerous retinue, their guards, their parasites.

No consideration there will be had of their windy titles, of their gay attire, and glittering pomp.

No respect will be had to the dread of their name, to the fame of their prowess; to that spurious glory, for which they unsettled mankind, and overturned the world; their actions will be strictly scanned according to the rules of God's law, and common equity.

They will be put to answer for all the violences and

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SERM. IX. and outrages, for all the ſpoils and rapines, for all the blood and ſlaughters, for all the ruins, devaſtations, and deſolations, their cruel ambition hath cauſed; for all the ſins they have committed, and all the miſchiefs they have done.

They who now have ſo many flatterers and adorers, will not then find one advocate to plead for them.

Thus it may appear that God is impartial.

But there are divers obvious exceptions againſt this doctrine. As,

Obj. 1. Is it not apparent that the gifts of God are diſtributed with great inequality?

Doth not one ſwim in wealth and plenty, while another coucheth under the burthen of extreme want and penury?

Are not ſome perched aloft in high dignity, while others crawl upon the ground, and grovel in deſpicable meanneſs?

Luke xvi. 19, 20. Are not ſome *clothed with purple and fine linen, and fare deliciouſly every day*; while others ſcarce find rags to cover them, and *lie at the door* begging for relief?

Do not ſome thrive and proſper in their affairs, while others are diſappointed and croſſed in their undertakings?

Pſal. xvii. 10. lxxiii. 7. Job. xxi. 7---xii. 6. Jer. xii. 1. Hab. i. 16. 1 Cor. iv. 7. Was it not truly obſerved of ſome perſons (and thoſe leaſt deſerving good fortune) *They are incloſed in their own fat—Their eyes ſtand out with fatneſs; they have more than heart could wiſh?*

And whence doth this difference come, but from God's hand? *Who*, as the Apoſtle aſketh, *maketh thee to differ* from another, but God the diſpoſer of all things?

To this exception I anſwer:

Rom. viii. 18. Ἀογίζομαι γὰρ ὅτι οὐκ ἄξια—— 2 Cor. iv. 17. 1. That temporal things are ſo inconſiderable, that they ſcarce deſerve to come into the balance, or to be computed; for they have but the ſame proportion to ſpiritual things, as time hath to eternity; or a finite to an infinite; which is none at all.

What

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What partiality therefore is there, if God in mercy and patience beſtow on bad men a farthing in the temporal *conſolations* of this life (if the univerſal Father give a ſmall *portion in this life* to untoward children) while he reſerveth infinite millions for his obedient children? SERM. IX. Luke vi. 24. xvi. 25. Pſal. xvii. 14.

2. The goods of fortune commonly are diſpenſed not by a ſpecial hand of God, but according to the general courſe of providence: and what partiality is he guilty of, who ſcattereth money into a crowd of poor people; although in ſcrambling ſome get more than other; and often the worſt (being moſt bold and fierce) do get moſt?

3. Indeed the receiving thoſe gifts is no ſign of God's ſpecial regard; as the Preacher well obſerved; *No man knoweth either love or hatred by all that is before them: All things come alike to all; there is one event to the righteous and to the wicked.* Eccleſ. ix. 1, 2.

4. God, as St. Auſtin ſaith, purpoſely doth ſparingly deal theſe things to good men, and freely beſtoweth them on bad men, to ſhew how little we ought to value them; how much inferior they are to ſpiritual goods. For ſurely he would give the beſt things to his friends, and the worſt to his enemies.

5. Even temporal gifts are diſpenſed with a very even hand; for if, barring injudicious fancy and vulgar opinion, we rightly prize things, we compare the conveniencies and inconveniencies of each ſtate, it will be hard to judge which hath the advantage.

Wealth hath more advantages for pleaſure; but it hath alſo more cares, more fears, more croſſes, more dangers, more troubles, more temptations.

It hath more plenty; but withal it hath leſs ſafety, leſs eaſe, leſs liberty, leſs quiet, leſs real enjoyment.

Set the diſtraction of the rich man's mind againſt the toil of the pooreſt man's body; the nauſeous ſurfeits

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SERM. IX. ſurfeits of one againſt the griping hunger of the other.

That which really doth conſtitute a ſtate happy and content, may be common to both, or wanting to either, as the perſon is diſpoſed.

6. The goods of fortune are not purely gifts, but talents depoſited in truſt for God's ſervice, for which a proportionable return is expected; ſo that he that hath leſs of them, hath a leſs burthen to bear, and an eaſier account to render.

7. Many gifts are not diſpenſed with perſonal regard, but for public good; and therefore all have an intereſt in them.

The wealth, the power, the reputation, the proſperity of a prince, of a nobleman, of a gentleman, are not his, but his neighbour's; for governing, for protecting, for encouraging, for aſſiſting whom, they are conferred: the world not being able to ſubſiſt in order and peace without ſubordinate ranks, and without anſwerable means to maintain them.

Luke i. 79. Matt. iv. 16. Eph. iv. 18. ii. 1. Tit. iii. 3. 1 Pet. iv. 3.

Obj. 2. It is apparent, that God diſpenſeth his grace, the light of knowledge, and means of ſalvation, very unequally; ſome nations living in the clear ſunſhine of the Goſpel, while others *ſit in darkneſs and the ſhadow of death*; whole nations being detained in barbarous and brutiſh ignorance.

To anſwer this exception fully, would require much diſcourſe; it being a dark and difficult point: but briefly we may ſay,

1. That God diſpenſeth meaſures of grace, according to a juſt, yet inſcrutable wiſdom, knowing what uſe will be made thereof, and what *fruit* men will *bear*. It may therefore be a favour not to diſpenſe light to them, who are not prepared to embrace and improve it well.

2. No man can tell what God doth in preparation, and what obſtructions are made by men to his grace.

3. As

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3. As lower means of grace are conferred, so proportionably less returns are expected.

4. How hard soever it may be to descry the reason of God's proceedings in this case, yet assuredly it is just; and our ignorance of it should not prejudice the belief of those general truths, which are so plainly declared, concerning the universal benignity and impartial equity of God.

Obj. 3. Is it not in holy Scripture sometimes asserted, that God doth act arbitrariously and absolutely; dispensing his bounty and mercy, without regard to any quality in men, or deed committed by them, either in whole, or in proportion—— God saith, *I will have mercy on whom I will have mercy*——and, *Is it not lawful for me to do what I will with mine own?* Rom. ix. 15. Matt. xx. 15.

Is not a plain instance of this dealing alledged by St. Paul concerning Jacob and Esau, that *before the children were born, or had done either good or evil,* God said, *The elder shall serve the younger*; and in regard thereto, in the Prophet, *Jacob have I loved, but Esau have I hated?* Rom. ix. 11, 12, 13.

We answer briefly, that

Such expressions do import, not that God acteth absolutely in the thing itself, but *quoad nos*; not that he acteth without reason, but upon reasons (transcending our capacity, or our means to know it) incomprehensible or undiscernible to us; not that he can give no account, but is not obliged to render any to us; that the methods of his providence commonly are inscrutable; that his proceedings are not subject to our examination and censure; that his acting doth sufficiently authorise and justify itself; that it is high presumption and arrogance for us to scan, sift, or contest, or cavil at the equity or wisdom of God's acting. Rom. xi. 33. Rom. ix. 20.

That God doth not act according to necessity, but is free in dispensing his mercy, and applying it to any

SERM. IX. any perſon, ſo that they have nothing to challenge upon account of their own deſerts or works; but muſt refer all to his mere bounty.

However, there can be nothing in theſe myſteries of predeſtination and providence, which really doth ſubvert an aſſertion ſo often clearly expreſſed, and ſo well grounded in reaſon, or the conſideration of God's nature, attributes, ordinary way of acting, &c.

Whatever expreſſions are repugnant thereto in ſound, whatever inſtances (depending on occult cauſes) in appearance do croſs it; it yet muſt ſtand, that God is impartially merciful, benign, juſt, &c.

(Iſa. xlix. 1. 5.) Jer. i. 5. Luke i. 15. Gal. i. 15. *Obj.* 4. Had not Jeremy, St. John Baptiſt, St. Paul abſolute favours and graces conferred on them, who were *ſanctified*, and ſeparated from the womb to be prophets and apoſtles?

Jer. i. 10. Luke i. 16. Acts ix. 15. xxvi. 16. *Reſp.* Theſe favours were in deſign not ſo much particular and perſonal, as general and public; thoſe perſons being raiſed up by God upon occaſions as needful inſtruments (*elect veſſels*) of his providence, to inſtruct men, and to reduce them to God; ſo that God, in raiſing up ſuch extraordinary perſons, did expreſs his common goodneſs to mankind.

κεχαριτωμένη. Luke i. 28. The like may be ſaid of that ſpecial favour, which was vouchſafed to the holy Virgin, who was κεχαριτωμένη, and *bleſſed among women*, for the general good of mankind.

The conſideration of this point is very uſeful, and may diſpoſe us to many ſorts of good practice.

1. No man ſhould preſume upon God's dealing with him more favourably than with others, as if he were a darling, or favourite; that God will indulge him in the commiſſion of any thing prohibited, or in omiſſion of any duty.

No man ſhould indulge himſelf in any thing, upon a conceit, that God will indulge him, or overſee his errors;

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errors; and that, in this ſenſe, *He ſeeth not iniquity in Jacob.* SERM. IX.

2. No man ſhould be puffed up with conceit, that God hath a ſingular regard to him. For all ſuch conceits are groundleſs and vain; in them men do miſerably delude themſelves.

No man can otherwiſe found any aſſurance of God's ſpecial love to him, than upon a good conſcience; teſtifying, that he doth ſincerely love God, and endeavour faithfully to obey his commandments. 1 John iii. 19. 21.

3. No man ſhould deſpair of God's favour; ſeeing God hath no particular averſation from any; but every perſon hath the ſame grounds of hope.

If we can buckle our hearts to obſerve our duty, we may be ſure to be accepted.

If thou doſt well, ſhalt thou not be accepted? Gen. iv. 7.

4. No man ſhould be diſcouraged for his condition, or fortune; ſince in allotting it to him God had no disfavour, nor did intend him ill.

God hath no leſs regard to him, than to perſons of the moſt high, wealthy, proſperous ſtate.

5. No man ſhould repine, murmur, or complain of God's dealing, as if he were unkindly uſed, more than others. For there is no ſuch thing. God dealeth alike kindly with all.

6. No man, upon account of his rank, wealth, or worldly advantages, ſhould boaſt or pride himſelf; ſeeing thence he partaketh no more, than his meaneſt and pooreſt neighbour, of the principal advantage, God's favour.

7. No man, upon ſuch accounts, ſhould deſpiſe his neighbour, *the brother of low degree:* for upon theſe accounts it appeareth, that the Wiſe Man ſaith truly, that *He is void of wiſdom, who deſpiſeth his neighbour*; ſeeing no man can be deſpicable, whom God regardeth; ſeeing *God*, as Elihu ſaith, *is mighty, and deſpiſeth not any*; ſeeing the meaneſt perſon ſtandeth Jam. i. 9. ὁ ταπεινὸς. Prov. xi. 12. xiv. 21. Job xxxvi. 5. (Jam. ii. 6.)

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SERM. IX. on equal terms with the greateſt in the eye of God.

8. Great men ſhould not take themſelves for another ſort of creatures, or another race of men than their poor neighbours; that the world is theirs, and all things are for them; that they may do what they pleaſe; that they are exempted from laws, which oblige others; for in moral and ſpiritual accounts they are upon a level with others.

Quorum fatis cœlum omne vacavit. *Luc.* lib. vii.

They are but fellow-ſubjects and fellow-ſervants with others; all accountable to the ſame Maſter.

9. Superiors hence ſhould be moved to deal fairly, gently, and courteouſly with inferiors; ſeeing theſe are their fellow-ſervants, equally conſiderable as themſelves with the great Maſter of the family.

This is the uſe, to which St. Paul applieth the conſideration:

Col. iv. 1. iii. ult. *Maſters, give unto your ſervants that which is juſt and equal, knowing that ye have a Maſter in heaven*——

Epheſ. vi. 9. *Ye maſters, do the ſame things unto them*, (that is, be conſcientiouſly good to them, as they are faithful to you) *forbearing threatening; knowing that your Maſter alſo is in heaven, neither is there reſpect of perſons with him.*

10. This conſideration ſhould preſerve us from ſuperſtition, or thinking to pleaſe or ſatisfy God, win his favour, or appeaſe his diſpleaſure, by uncouth ways, which he hath not preſcribed to all men; to corrupt him by our ſacrifices and oblations; our flatteries, gloſings, colloguings with him; ſo that he will indulge us in any bad thing, or excuſe us from our true duty, in regard to thoſe affected ſervices.

We do herein but abuſe ourſelves; for he will not approve or accept us upon any other account, than of diſcharging our duty, being truly righteous and good.

Coloſſ. ii. Mic. vi. 7, 8.

11. It is matter of comfort and ſatisfaction to a man, who is conſcious of his ſincerity, that (whatever

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ever his condition and circumstances be) God will have a fair regard thereto, and will not reject him. SERM. IX.

It was so to Job; *Doth not God see my ways, and count all my steps?——Let me be weighed in an even balance, that God may know my integrity.* Job xxxi. 4. 6.

12. The consideration of this point should keep us from partial respects of men. Jam. ii. 1. 9. Prov. xxviii. 21.

Not to admire the state of great men, nor to yield them undue deferences, (in prejudice to meaner persons, making greater difference than there is ground for) not to flatter or humour them in an immoderate measure, or unbeseeming manner. οὐ μᾶλλον σὺ περὶ ἐκείνος. Matt. xxii. 16.

This is that which St. James doth urge in his second chapter, as a very unequal thing. Θαυμάζειν πρόσωπα. Jude, ver. 16.

We should imitate God; we should consider that our opinions and affections should resemble his. Levit. xix. 15.

As in exterior judgment no respect is to be had to the rich above the poor; so neither in the interior judgment or esteem of our mind; to which St. James seemeth to apply the law; *If ye have respect to persons, ye commit sin, and are convinced of the law as transgressors.* Deut. i. 17. xvi. 19. Prov. xxiv. 23. xvi. 5. xxviii. 21. Jam. ii. 9.

13. This should keep us from envying at those who have more worldly advantages.

14. It should keep us from being offended, or scandalized, or perverted into false notions of God, upon occasion of any mysterious points, or hard expressions importing absolute and arbitrary proceedings of God, in predestination, or providence. For however they are to be understood, they cannot derogate from the impartial goodness and justice of God.

15. This consideration should engage us readily to pay due respect and reverence to princes, to magistrates, to all our superiors.

For hence we see, that the reason why we are commanded to honour and fear them, is, not their

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SERM. IX. worldly grandeur of wealth or power, (things of ſmall conſideration with God;) but it ſtandeth on more ſolid ground, their ſacred relations to God, as his repreſentatives and officers; who in his name and behalf do adminiſter juſtice, and protect right and innocence, encourage virtue, maintain order and peace in the world.

Though God doth not favour their perſons as rich and mighty; yet he regardeth his own character imprinted on them; he regardeth his honour and intereſt concerned in their reſpect; he regardeth the public good of mankind, which they are conſtituted to promote: he conſiders them as the *miniſters of his kingdom*, and inſtruments of conveying his benefits to mankind.

Whence he *giveth ſalvation to kings*, he by his law, and by his providence, doth guard and ſecure them from violence, from contempt, from diſreſpect.

In honouring them, we honour the authority of God, and the character of divinity ſtamped on them; we ſerve ourſelves, for whoſe ſake they are conſtituted, for whoſe good they watch.

Rom. xiv. 4. Εἰς ἀγαθόν.

It may alſo engage us the more gladly and fully to yield them their due reſpect, to conſider, that their condition is not invidious, or their caſe better than other men's; ſeeing they are accountable to God for the advantages of it; ſeeing that God hath no regard to them upon account of that greatneſs which dazzleth our eyes; ſeeing that for all the burthens they ſuſtain, for all the cares they take, for all the pains they endure, for our good and public ſervice, they can receive ſo inconſiderable a recompence from us.

Finally, it ſhould engage us to be very careful of our ways, and diligent in our obedience; ſeeing there is no other way poſſible of pleaſing God, of gaining his favour and friendſhip, of appeaſing his diſpleaſure, of

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of standing upright, and coming off well in his judg- SERM.
ment; this is St. Peter's inference, with which I IX.
conclude.

If ye call on the Father, who without respect of per- 1 Pet. i. 17.
sons judgeth according to every man's work, pass the time of your sojourning here in fear.

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SERMON X.

The Profitableneſs of Godlineſs.

1 TIM. iv. 8.

——But Godlineſs is profitable for all things.

HOW generally men, with moſt unanimous conſent, are devoted to profit, as to the immediate ſcope of their deſigns, and aim of their doings, if with the ſlighteſt attention we view what is acted upon this theatre of human affairs, we cannot but diſcern. All that we ſee men ſo very ſerious and induſtrious about, which we call buſineſs; that which they trudge for in the ſtreets, which they work or wait for in the ſhops, which they meet and crowd for at the exchange, which they ſue for in the hall, and ſolicit for at the court, which they plough and dig for, which they march and fight for in the field, which they travel for at land, and ſail for (among rocks and ſtorms) upon the ſea, which they plod for in the cloſet, and diſpute for in the ſchools, (yea, may we not add, which they frequently pray for and preach for in the Church?) what is it but profit? Is it not this apparently, for which men ſo eagerly conteſt and quarrel, ſo bitterly envy and emulate, ſo fiercely clamour and inveigh, ſo cunningly ſupplant and undermine one another; which ſtuffeth their

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Prov. xiv. 23. Φεῦ, δὺ' ἰζαλὼ ὡς μάγα δύναζον πανταχῦ. Ariſtoph. Plut.

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SERM. X. hearts with mutual hatred and ſpite, which tippeth their tongues with ſlander and reproach, which often embrueth their hands with blood and ſlaughter; for which they expoſe their lives and limbs to danger, for which they undergo grievous toils and drudgeries, for which they diſtract their mind with cares, and *pierce their heart with ſorrows*; to which they ſacrifice their preſent eaſe and content, yea, to which commonly they proſtitute their honour and conſcience? This, if you mark it, is the great miſtreſs, which is with ſo paſſionate rivality every where wooed and courted; this the common mark, which all eyes aim and all endeavours ſtrike at; this the hire, which men demand for all their pains, the prize they hope for in all their combats, the harveſt they ſeek from all the year's aſſiduous labour. This is the bait, by which you may inveigle moſt men any whither; and the moſt certain ſign, by which you may prognoſticate what any man will do: for mark where his profit is, there will he be. This ſome profeſſedly and with open face, others ſlily and under thin veils of pretence, (under guiſe of friendſhip, of love to public good, of loyalty, of religious zeal;) ſome directly and in a plain track, others obliquely and by ſubtle trains; ſome by ſordid and baſe means, others in ways more cleanly and plauſible; ſome gravely and modeſtly, others wildly and furiouſly; all, (very few excepted) in one manner or another, do clearly in moſt of their proceedings level and drive at [a].

This practice then being ſo general, and ſeeing that men are reaſonable creatures, that it is ſo cannot ſurely proceed from mere brutiſhneſs, or dotage; there muſt be ſome fair colour or ſemblance of rea-

[a] Prima fere vota, et cunctis notiſſima Templis
Divitiæ ut creſcant, &c. *Juv. Sat.* x.
Omnes ad affectum atque appetitum utilitatis ſuæ naturæ ipſius magiſterio atque impulſione ducuntur. *Salv. ad Eccl. Cath.* 2.

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ſon, which draweth men into, and carrieth them forward in this way. The reaſon indeed is obvious and evident enough; the very name of profit implieth it, ſignifying that which is uſeful, or conducible to purpoſes really or ſeemingly good. The gain of money, or of ſomewhat equivalent thereto, is therefore ſpecially termed profit, becauſe it readily ſupplieth neceſſity, furniſheth convenience, feedeth pleaſure, ſatisfieth fancy and curioſity, promoteth eaſe and liberty, ſupporteth honour and dignity, procureth power, dependencies, and friendſhips, rendereth a man ſomebody conſiderable in the world; in fine, enableth to do good, or to perform works of beneficence and charity. Profit is therefore ſo much affected and purſued, becauſe it is, or doth ſeem, apt to procure or promote ſome good deſirable to us. SERM. X.

If therefore a project ſhould be propoſed to us very feaſible, and probable to ſucceed, in purſuance whereof aſſuredly we might obtain great profit; methinks, in conſiſtence with ourſelves, and conformably to our uſual manner of acting, we ſhould be very ready to embrace and execute it. Such a project it is, which in my text, by a very truſty voucher and ſkilful judge of ſuch things, and one who had himſelf fully experimented it, is propoſed; which in itſelf is very practicable, ſo that any of us may, if we have a mind to it, and will be at the pains, throughly compaſs and carry it on: which will exceedingly turn to account, and bring in gains unto us unſpeakably vaſt; in compariſon whereto all other deſigns, which men with ſo much care and toil do purſue, are very unprofitable, or detrimental, yielding but ſhadows of profit, or bringing real damage to us.

It is briefly this, to be religious or pious; that is, in our minds ſtedfaſtly to believe on God, (ſuch as nature in ſome meaſure, and revelation more clearly, declareth him,) in our hearts earneſtly to love and reverence him, through all our practice ſincerely and diligently

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SERM. X. diligently to obſerve his laws. This is it which St. Paul affirmeth to be *profitable for all things*, and which it is my intent, by God's help, to recommend unto you as ſuch; demonſtrating it really to be ſo, by repreſenting ſome of thoſe numberleſs benefits and advantages which accrue from it, extending to all conditions and capacities of men, to all ſtates, all ſeaſons, and in effect to all affairs of life.

It hath been ever a main obſtruction to the practice of piety, that it hath been taken for no friend, or rather for an enemy, to profit; as both unprofitable and prejudicial to its followers: and many ſemblances there are countenancing that opinion. For religion ſeemeth to ſmother or to ſlacken the induſtry and alacrity of men in following profit, many ways: by charging them to be content with a little, and careful for nothing; by diverting their affections and cares from worldly affairs to matters of another nature, place, and time, preſcribing in the firſt place to ſeek things ſpiritual, heavenly, and future; by diſparaging all ſecular wealth, as a thing, in compariſon to virtue and ſpiritual goods, very mean and inconſiderable; by checking greedy deſires and aſpiring thoughts after it; by debarring the moſt ready ways of getting it, (violence, exaction, fraud, and flattery,) yea, ſtraightening the beſt ways, eager care and diligence; by commending ſtrict juſtice in all caſes, and always taking part with conſcience, when it claſheth with intereſt; by paring away the largeſt uſes of wealth, in the prohibition of its free enjoyment to pride or pleaſure; by enjoining liberal communication thereof in ways of charity and mercy; by engaging men to expoſe their goods ſometimes to imminent hazard, ſometimes to certain loſs; obliging them to forſake all things, and to embrace poverty for its ſake.

It favoureth this conceit, to obſerve, that often bad men by impious courſes do appear to thrive and proſper; while good men ſeem for their goodneſs to

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to ſuffer, or to be no wiſe viſibly better for it, en- SERM.
during much hardſhip and diſtreſs. X.

It furthereth the prejudice, that ſome perſons, void of true piety, or imperfectly good, (ſome *dabblers* in religion) do not from their lame, ſlight, and ſuperficial performances, feel ſatisfactory returns, ſuch as they did preſume to find; and thence, to the defamation of piety, are apt to ſay, with thoſe men in the prophet, *It is vain to ſerve God; and what profit is* Mal. iii. 14. *it that we have kept his ordinances, and that we have walked mournfully before the Lord of hoſts?* Yea, that ſometimes very pious men, being out of humour, and ſomewhat diſcompoſed by the urgent preſſures of affliction, the diſappointments and croſſes incident to all men here in this region of trouble, are apt to complain and expreſs themſelves diſſatisfied, ſaying with Job, *It profiteth a man nothing, that he ſhould* Job xxxiv. *delight himſelf with God. What advantage will it be* 9. xxxv. 3. *unto me, and what profit ſhall I have, if I be cleanſed from my ſin?* or with David, *Verily I have cleanſed my* Pſ. lxxiii. *heart in vain, and waſhed my hands in innocency: for all* 13, 14. *the day long I have been plagued, and chaſtened every morning.*

To theſe conſiderations, diſadvantageous in this reſpect to piety, may be added, that the conſtant and certain profits emergent from it (although incomparably more ſubſtantial, and to the mind more ſenſible than any other,) are not yet ſo groſs and palpable, that men, who from being immerſed in earth and fleſh are blind in error, dull of apprehenſion, vain and inconſiderate in their judgments, tainted and vitiated in their palates, can diſcern their worth, or reliſh their ſweetneſs. Hence it is that ſo many follow the judgment and practice of thoſe in Job, *who* Job xxi. *ſay unto God, Depart from us, for we deſire not the know-* 14, 15. *ledge of thy ways. What is the Almighty, that we ſhould ſerve him? and what profit ſhould we have, if we pray unto him?*

For voiding which prejudices, and the recommendation

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SERM. X. dation of St. Paul's project, I ſhall, as I ſaid, propoſe ſome of thoſe innumerable advantages, by conſidering which the immenſe profitableneſs of piety will appear. And firſt, I ſhall mention thoſe conſiderations, which more plainly do import univerſality; then ſhall touch ſome benefits thereof, ſeeming more particular, yet in effect vaſtly large, and of a very diffuſive influence.

I. Firſt then, we may conſider, that piety is exceeding uſeful for all ſorts of men, in all capacities, all ſtates, all relations; fitting and diſpoſing them to manage all their reſpective concernments, to diſcharge all their peculiar duties, in a proper, juſt, and decent manner.

Eph. vi. 9. Col. iv. 1. It rendereth all ſuperiors equal and moderate in their adminiſtrations; mild, courteous, and affable in their converſe; benign and condeſcenſive in all their demeanour toward their inferiors.

Eph. vi. 5. Col. iii. 22. 1 Pet. ii. 18. Correſpondently it diſpoſeth inferiors to be ſincere and faithful, modeſt, loving, reſpectful, diligent, apt willingly to yield due ſubjection and ſervice.

It inclineth princes to be juſt, gentle, benign, careful for their ſubjects' good, apt to adminiſter juſtice uprightly, to protect right, to encourage virtue, to check wickedneſs.

Rom. xiii. 1. Tit. iii. 1. 1 Pet. ii. 13. Anſwerably it rendereth ſubjects loyal, ſubmiſſive, obedient, quiet, and peaceable, ready to yield due honour, to pay the tributes, and bear the burthens impoſed, to diſcharge all duties, and obſerve all laws preſcribed by their governors conſcionably, patiently, cheerfully, without reluctancy, grudging, or murmuring.

1 Pet. iv. 9. Phil. ii. 14. Eph. vi. 4. Col. iii. 21. 1 Tim. v. 8. Eph. vi. 1. It maketh parents loving, gentle, provident for their children's good education, and comfortable ſubſiſtence; children again, dutiful, reſpectful, grateful, apt to requite their parents.

Col. iii. 20. Eph v. 25. Col. iii. 19. 1 Pet. iii. 7. Eph. v. 22. Col. iii. 18. Tit. ii. 5. 1 Pet. iii. 5. Huſbands from it become affectionate and compliant to their wives; wives ſubmiſſive and obedient to their huſbands.

It

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It diſpoſeth friends to be friends indeed, full of cordial affection and good-will, entirely faithful, firmly conſtant, induſtriouſly careful and active in performing all good offices mutually.

It engageth men to be diligent in their calling, faithful to their truſts, contented and peaceable in their ſtation, and thereby ſerviceable to public good.

It rendereth all men juſt and punctual in their dealing, orderly and quiet in their behaviour, courteous and complaiſant in their converſation, friendly and charitable upon all occaſions, apt to aſſiſt, to relieve, to comfort one another. Gal. vi. 2. 10. Phil. iv. 8. 1 Theſſ. iii. 12. 2 Cor. ix. 13.

It tieth all relations more faſtly and ſtrongly, aſſureth and augmenteth all endearments, enforceth and eſtabliſheth all obligations by the firm bands of conſcience; ſet aſide which, no engagement can hold ſure againſt temptations of intereſt or pleaſure. Much difference there is between performing theſe duties out of natural temper, fear of puniſhment, hope of temporal reward, ſelfiſh deſign, regard to credit, or other the like principles, and the diſcharging them out of religious conſcience; this alone will keep men tight, uniform, reſolute, and ſtable; whereas all other principles are looſe and ſlippery, will ſoon be ſhaken and faulter.

In conſequence to thoſe practices ſpringing from it, piety removeth oppreſſion, violence, faction, diſorders, and murmurings, out of the ſtate; ſchiſms and ſcandals out of the church; pride and haughtineſs, ſloth and luxury, detraction and ſycophantry out of the court; corruption and partiality out of judicatures; clamours and tumults out of the ſtreet; brawlings, grudges, and jealouſies out of families; extortion and cozenage out of trade; ſtrifes, emulations, ſlanderous backbitings, bitter and foul language out of converſation: in all places, in all ſocieties it produceth, it advanceth, it eſtabliſheth, order, peace, ſafety, proſperity, all that is good, all that is lovely or handſome, all that is convenient or pleaſant for human

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SERM. X. human ſociety and common life. It is that which, as the Wiſe Man ſaith, *exalteth a nation*; it is that which *eſtabliſheth a throne.*

Prov. xiv. 34. xvi. 12. xx. 28. xxix. 14. xxix. 8. It is indeed the beſt prop and guard that can be of government, and of the commonweal: for it ſettleth the body politic in a ſound conſtitution of health, it firmly cementeth the parts thereof; it putteth all things into a right order and ſteady courſe. It procureth mutual reſpect and affection between governors and ſubjects, whence ariſeth ſafety, eaſe, and pleaſure to both. It rendereth men truly good, (that is, juſt and honeſt, ſober and conſiderate, modeſt and peaceable,) and thence apt, without any conſtraint or ſtir, to yield every one their due; not affected to needleſs change, not diſpoſed to raiſe any diſturbance. It putteth men in good humour, and keepeth them in it; whence things paſs ſmoothly and pleaſantly. It cheriſheth worth, and encourageth induſtry; whence virtue flouriſheth, and wealth is increaſed; whence the occaſions and means of diſorder are ſtopped, the pretences for ſedition and faction are cut off. In fine, it certainly procureth the benediction of God, the ſource Prov. xi. 10. of all welfare and proſperity: whence, *When it goeth* xxix. 2. *well with the righteous, the city rejoiceth*; and *When the righteous are in authority, the people rejoice*, ſaith the great politician Solomon.

It is therefore the concernment of all men, who, Pſal. xxxiv. 12. as the Pſalmiſt ſpeaketh, *deſire to live well, and would* 1 Pet. iii. 10. *fain ſee good days*; it is the ſpecial intereſt of great perſons, (of the magiſtracy, the nobility, the gentry, of all perſons that have any conſiderable intereſt in the world,) who would ſafely and ſweetly enjoy their dignity, power, or wealth, by all means to protect and promote piety, as the beſt inſtrument of their ſecurity, and undiſturbedly enjoying the accommodations of their ſtate. It is in all reſpects their beſt wiſdom and policy; that which will as well preſerve their outward ſtate here, as ſatisfy their conſciences within

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in, and ſave their ſouls hereafter. All the Machia- SERM. vilian arts and tricks, all the ſleights and fetches of worldly craft, do ſignify nothing in compariſon to this one plain and eaſy way of ſecuring and furthering their intereſts. X.

If then it be a groſs abſurdity to deſire the fruits, and not to take care of the root, not to cultivate the ſtock, whence they ſprout; if every prince gladly would have his ſubjects loyal and obedient, every maſter would have his ſervants honeſt, diligent, and obſervant, every parent would have his children officious and grateful, every man would have his friend faithful and kind, every one would have thoſe juſt and ſincere, with whom he doth negotiate or converſe; if any one would chooſe to be related to ſuch, and would eſteem their relation a happineſs; then conſequently ſhould every man in reaſon ſtrive to further piety, from whence alone thoſe good diſpoſitions and practices do proceed.

II. Piety doth fit a man for all conditions, qualifying him to paſs through them all with the beſt advantage, wiſely, cheerfully, and ſafely; ſo as to incur no conſiderable harm or detriment by them.

Is a man proſperous, high, or wealthy in condition? Piety guardeth him from all the miſchiefs incident to that ſtate, and diſpoſeth him to enjoy the beſt advantages thereof. It keepeth him from being ſwelled and puffed up with vain conceit, from being tranſported with fond complacence or confidence therein; minding him, that it is purely the gift of God, that it abſolutely dependeth on his diſpoſal, ſo that it may ſoon be taken from him, and that he cannot otherwiſe than by humility, by gratitude, by the good uſe of it, be ſecure to retain it; minding him alſo, that he ſhall aſſuredly be forced to render a ſtrict account concerning the good management thereof. It preſerveth him from being perverted or corrupted with the temptations, to which that condition is moſt liable; from luxury, from ſloth, from ſtupidity,

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SERM. X. ſtupidity, from forgetfulneſs of God, and of himſelf; maintaining among the floods of plenty a ſober and ſteady mind. It fenceth him from inſolence, and faſtuous contempt of others; rendereth him civil, condeſcenſive, kind and helpful to thoſe who are in a meaner ſtate. It inſtructeth and inciteth him to apply his wealth and power to the beſt uſes, to the ſervice of God, to the benefit of his neighbour, for his own beſt reputation, and moſt ſolid comfort. It is the right ballaſt of proſperity, the only antidote for all the inconveniences of wealth; that which ſecureth, ſweeteneth, and ſanctifieth all other goods: without it all apparent goods are very noxious, or extremely dangerous: riches, power, honour, eaſe, pleaſure, are ſo many poiſons, or ſo many ſnares, without it. Again, is a man poor and low in the world? Piety doth improve and ſweeten even that ſtate: it keepeth his ſpirits up above dejection, deſperation, and diſconſolateneſs; it freeth him from all grievous ſolicitude and anxiety; ſhewing him, that although he ſeemeth to have little, yet he may be aſſured to want nothing, he having a certain ſuccour and never-failing ſupply from God's good providence; that, notwithſtanding the preſent ſtraitneſs of his condition, or ſcantneſs of outward things, he hath a title to goods infinitely more precious and more conſiderable. A pious man cannot but apprehend himſelf like the child of the moſt wealthy, kind, and careful father, who although he hath yet nothing in his own poſſeſſion, or paſſing under his name, yet is aſſured, that he can never come into any want of what is needful to him: the Lord of all things (who hath all things in heaven and earth at his diſpoſal, who is infinitely tender of his children's good, who doth inceſſantly watch over them) being his gracious Father, how can he fear to be left deſtitute, or not to be competently provided for, as is truly beſt for him?

This is the difference between a pious and an impious

pious man. Is the pious man in need? he hath then an inviſible refuge to fly to, an inviſible ſtore to furniſh him; he hath ſomewhat beyond all preſent things to hope in, to comfort himſelf with: whereas the impious perſon hath nothing beſide preſent appearances to ſupport or ſolace himſelf by; the which failing, down he ſinketh into dejection and deſpair. Is the good man in affliction? he knoweth that it cometh not on him without God's wiſe appointment, nor without good intention toward him, for probation, exerciſe, and improvement of his virtues, or for wholeſome correction of his bad diſpoſitions; that it is only phyſic and diſcipline to him, which ſhall have a comfortable iſſue; that it ſhall laſt no longer than it is expedient for him that it ſhould: wherefore he patiently ſubmitteth to it, and undergoeth it cheerfully, with the ſame mind wherewith a patient ſwalloweth down an unſavoury potion, which he preſumeth will conduce to his health [b]. Never, indeed, hath any man enjoyed more real content, or hath been more truly ſatisfied, than good men have been in a ſeeming depth of adverſity. What men ever upon earth have been more ſorely afflicted, have undergone greater loſſes, diſgraces, labours, troubles, diſtreſſes in any kind, than did the holy Apoſtles? Yet did they moſt heartily rejoice, exult, and triumph in them all [c]. Such a wondrous virtue hath piety to change all things into matter of conſolation and joy. No condition in effect can be evil or ſad to a pious man: his very ſorrows are pleaſant, his infirmities are wholeſome, his wants enrich him, his diſgraces

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[b] Scimus amicos Dei ab amantiſſimo, miſericordiſſimo Patre Deo mala iſta pœnalia recipere, non ut pœnam ſeu vindictam iracundiæ, ſed magis ut correctiones et medicamenta ſtultitiæ, et adjumenta virtutis, ut malleationes ſive fabricationes, et tunſiones, ſive ablutiones, et candidationes. *Guil. Par. de Sacram.*

[c] Ἐκείνης μὲν γὰρ ἐπικύφιζεν ἡ χαρὰ τῆς μαρτυρίας, καὶ ἡ ἐλπὶς τῶν ἐπαγγελμάτων καὶ ἡ πρὸς τὸν Χριστὸν ἀγάπη, καὶ τὸ πνεῦμα τὸ πατρικόν. *Euſeb.* v. 1. Mart. Lugd.

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SERM. X. adorn him, his burthens eaſe him; his duties are privileges, his falls are the grounds of advancement, his very ſins (as breeding contrition, humility, circumſpection, and vigilance) do better and profit him: whereas impiety doth ſpoil every condition, doth corrupt and embaſe all good things, doth embitter all the conveniences and comforts of life.

III. Piety doth virtually compriſe within it all other profits, ſerving all the deſigns of them all: whatever kind of deſirable good we can hope to find from any other profit, we may be aſſured to enjoy from it.

He that hath it is *ipſo facto* vaſtly rich, is intitled to immenſe treaſures of moſt precious wealth; in compariſon whereto all the gold and all the jewels in the world are mere baubles. He hath intereſt in God, and can call him his, who is the *all*, and in regard to whom all things exiſtent are *leſs than nothing*. The infinite power and wiſdom of God belong to him, to be ever, upon all fit occaſions, employed for his benefit. All the ineſtimable treaſures of heaven (a place infinitely more rich than the Indies) are his, after this moment of life, to have and to hold for ever: ſo that great reaſon had the Wiſe Man to ſay, Prov. xv. 6. that *In the houſe of the righteous is much treaſure.* Piety therefore is profitable, as immediately inſtating in wealth: and whereas the deſired fruits of profit are chiefly theſe, honour, power, pleaſure, ſafety, liberty, eaſe, opportunity of getting knowledge, means of benefitting others; all theſe we ſhall ſee do abundantly accrue from piety, and in truth only from it.

Sen. Ep. xc. Prov. xii. 26. Κατ' ἀλήθειαν ὁ ἀγαθὸς μόνος τιμητέος. Arist. Eth. iii. 3. The pious man is in truth moſt honourable. *Inter homines pro ſummo eſt optimus*, ſaith Seneca; whom Solomon tranſlateth thus: *The righteous is more excellent than his neighbour.* He is dignified by the moſt illuſtrious titles, a ſon of God, a friend and favourite to the ſovereign King of the world, an heir of heaven, a denizen of the Jeruſalem above: titles far ſurpaſſing all thoſe which worldly ſtate doth aſſume. He is approved by the beſt and moſt infallible judgments,

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ments, wherein true honour reſideth. He is re- SERM. ſpected by God himſelf, by the holy angels, by the X. bleſſed ſaints, by all good and all wiſe perſons; yea, commonly, by all men: for the effects of genuine piety are ſo venerable and amiable, that ſcarce any man can do otherwiſe than in his heart much eſteem him that worketh them. Prov. xii. 8.

The pious man is alſo the moſt potent man: he hath a kind of omnipotency, becauſe he can do whatever he will, that is, what he ought to do[d]; and becauſe the Divine Power is ever ready to aſſiſt him in his pious enterpriſes, ſo that *He can do all things by Chriſt that ſtrengtheneth him.* He is able to combat and vanquiſh him that is ὁ ἰσχυρὸς, *the ſtout and mighty one*; to wage war with happy ſucceſs *againſt principalities and powers.* He conquereth and commandeth himſelf, which is the braveſt victory and nobleſt empire: he quelleth fleſhly luſts, ſubdueth inordinate paſſions, and repelleth ſtrong temptations. He, *by his faith, overcometh the world* with a conqueſt far more glorious than ever any Alexander or Cæſar could do. He, in fine, doth perform the moſt worthy exploits, and deſerveth the moſt honourable triumphs that man can do. Prov. xvi. 32. xxv. 28. Vide Sen. de Ben. v. 7.

The pious man alſo doth enjoy the only true pleaſures; hearty, pure, ſolid, durable pleaſures; ſuch pleaſures as thoſe, of which the divine Pſalmiſt ſingeth: *In thy preſence is fulneſs of joy; at thy right hand there are pleaſures for evermore.* That *all joy in believing*, that *gaiety of hope*, that inceſſant *rejoicing in the Lord*, and *greatly delighting in his law*, that continual feaſt of a good conſcience, that *ſerving the Lord with gladneſs*, that *exceeding gladneſs with God's countenance*, that *comfort of the Holy Spirit*, that *joy unſpeakable and full of glory*; the ſatisfaction reſulting from the contemplation of heavenly truth, from the ſenſe of God's favour, and the pardon Pſ. xvi. 11. Rom. xv. 13. Heb. iii. 6. Phil. iv. 4. Pſ. xliii. 4. cxii. 1. i. 2. cxix. 16. 24. 47. 70. 77. 92. 111. 143. c. 2. xxi. 6. xciv. 19. li. xxix. 19. John xvi. 20, &c. 1 Pet. i. 8. Rom. xiv. 17.

[d] Tantum quantum vult poteſt, qui ſe niſi quod debet non putat poſſe. *Senec. Ep.* xc.

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don of his ſins, from the influence of God's grace, from the hopes and anticipation of everlaſting bliſs; theſe are pleaſures indeed, in compariſon whereto all other pleaſures are no more than brutiſh ſenſualities, ſordid impurities, ſuperficial touches, tranſient flaſhes of delight: ſuch as ſhould be inſipid and unſavoury to a rational appetite; ſuch as are tinctured with ſourneſs and bitterneſs, have painful remorſes or qualms conſequent [e]. All the pious man's performances of duty and of devotion are full of pure ſatisfaction and delight here, and ſhall be rewarded with perfect and endleſs joy hereafter.

As for ſafety, the pious man hath it moſt abſolute and ſure; he being guarded by Almighty power and wiſdom; *reſting under the ſhadow of God's wings*; God *upholding him with his hand, ordering his ſteps, ſo that none of them ſhall ſlide, holding his ſoul in life, and ſuffering not his feet to be moved*; he being, by the grace and mercy of God, ſecured from the aſſaults and impreſſions of all enemies, from ſin and guilt, from the Devil, world, and fleſh, from death and hell, which are our moſt formidable, and in effect only dangerous enemies.

Pſ. xvii. 8. xxxvi. 7. lvii. 1. lxi. 4. xci. 4. xxxvii. 24. cxix. 117. xxxvii. 23. 31. cxix. 133. lxvi. 9. cxix. 45.

As for liberty, the pious man moſt entirely and truly doth enjoy that; he alone is free from captivity to that cruel tyrant Satan, from the miſerable ſlavery to ſin, from the grievous dominion of luſt and paſſion. He can do what he pleaſeth, having a mind to do only what is good and fit. The Law he obſerveth is worthily called *the perfect law of liberty*; the Lord he ſerveth pretendeth only to command freemen and friends: *Ye are my friends*, ſaid he, *if ye do whatever I command you*; and, *If the Son ſet you free, then are ye free indeed.*

Jam. i. 25. John xv. 14. viii. 36.

Οὐ γὰρ ἐγὼ, ἐκ ἐγὼ ἐλεύθερος, ἀλλ' ἡ μόνος ὁ Χριστὸς ζῶν. *Chryſ. ad Theod.*

[e] Quid enim jucundius, quam Dei Patris et Domini reconciliatio, quam veritatis revelatio, quam errorum recognitio, quam tot retro criminum venia? quæ major voluptas, quam faſtidium ipſius voluptatis, quam ſæculi totius contemptus, quam vera libertas, quam conſcientia integra, quam vita ſufficiens, quam mortis timor nullus? &c. *Tert. de Spectac.* 29.

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And for eaſe, it is he only that knoweth it; having his mind exempted from the diſtraction of care, from diſorder of paſſion, from anguiſh of conſcience, from the drudgeries and troubles of the world, from the vexations and diſquiets which ſin produceth. He findeth it made good to him, which our Lord inviting him did promiſe, *Come unto me, all ye that labour and are heavy laden, and I will give you reſt:* he feeleth the truth of thoſe divine aſſertions, *Thou wilt keep him in perfect peace, whoſe mind is ſtayed on thee*; and, *Great peace have they which love thy law, and nothing ſhall offend them.* Matt. xi. 28. Iſ. xxvi. 3. Pſ. cxix. 165.

As for knowledge, the pious man alone doth attain it conſiderably, ſo as to become truly wiſe and learned to purpoſe. *Evil men*, ſaith the Wiſe Man himſelf, who knew well, *underſtand not judgment: but they that ſeek the Lord underſtand all things.* It is the pious man that employeth his mind upon the moſt proper and worthy objects, that knoweth things which certainly beſt deſerve to be known, that hath his ſoul enriched with the choiceſt notions; he ſkilleth to aim at the beſt ends, and to compaſs them by the fitteſt means; he can aſſign to each thing its due worth and value; he can proſecute things by the beſt methods, and order his affairs in the beſt manner: ſo that he is ſure not to be defeated or diſappointed in his endeavours, nor to miſ-ſpend his care and pains, without anſwerable fruit. He hath the beſt maſter to inſtruct him in his ſtudies, and the beſt rules to direct him in his proceedings: he cannot be miſtaken, ſeeing in his judgment and choice of things he conſpireth with infallible wiſdom. Therefore ὁ εὐσεβῶν ἄκρως φιλοσοφεῖ, *the pious man is the exquiſite philoſopher. The fear of the Lord that is wiſdom, and to depart from evil is underſtanding. The fear of the Lord* (as is ſaid again and again in Scripture) *is the head* (or *top*) *of wiſdom. A good underſtanding have all they that keep his commandments.* Prov. xxviii. 5. Triſmeg. Job xxviii. 28. Prov. ix. 10. i. 7. Pſal. cxi. 10. cxix. 34. 99. 104. 130.

Farther: the pious man is enabled and diſpoſed

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SERM. X. (hath the power and the heart) moſt to benefit and oblige others. He doth it by his ſuccour and aſſiſtance, by his inſtruction and advice, which he is ever ready to yield to any man upon fit occaſion: he doth it by the direction and encouragement of his good example: he doth it by his conſtant and earneſt prayers for all men: he doth it by drawing down bleſſings from heaven on the place where he reſideth. He is upon all accounts the moſt true, the moſt common benefactor to mankind; all his neighbours, his country, the world are in ſome way or other obliged to him: at leaſt, he doth all the good he can, and in wiſh doth benefit all men.

Thus all the fruits and conſequences of profit, the which engage men ſo eagerly to purſue it, do in the beſt kind and higheſt degree reſult from piety, and indeed only from it. All the philoſophical bravadoes concerning a wiſe man being only rich, only honourable, only happy, only above fortune, are verified in the pious man: to him alone, as ſuch, with a ſure foundation, without vanity, with evident reaſon, thoſe aphoriſms may be applied. They are paradoxes and fictions abſtracting from religion, or conſidering men only under the light and power of nature: but ſuppoſing our religion true, a good Chriſtian ſoberly, without arrogance, in proportion and according to the meaſure of his piety, may aſſume them to himſelf, as the holy Apoſtles did: *I poſſeſs all things, I can do all things*, he may in a ſort ſay after St. Paul.

Sen. Ep. lix. As for all other profits, ſecluding it, they are but imaginary and counterfeit, mere ſhadows and illuſions, yielding only painted ſhews inſtead of ſubſtantial fruit.

If from bare worldly wealth (that which uſurpeth the name of profit here) a man ſeeketh honour, he is deluded, for he is not thereby truly honourable; he is but a ſhining earth-worm, a well-trapped aſs, a gaudy ſtatue, a theatrical grandee: with God, who judgeth

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judgeth moſt rightly, he is mean and deſpicable: no intelligent perſon can inwardly reſpect him. Even here, in this world of fallacy and dotage, the wiſeſt and ſobereſt men, whoſe judgment uſually doth ſway that of others, cannot but contemn him, as maſter of no real good, nor fit for any good purpoſe; as ſeeing that in the end he will prove moſt beggarly and wretched. SERM. X.

If a man affecteth power thence, he is grievouſly miſtaken; for, inſtead thereof, he proveth exceedingly feeble and impotent, able to perform nothing worthy a man, ſubject to fond humours and paſſions, ſervant to divers luſts and pleaſures, *captivated by the Devil at his pleaſure*, overborne by temptation, hurried by the ſtream of the world, and liable to the ſtrokes of fortune.

If he propoundeth to himſelf thence the enjoyment of pleaſure, he will alſo much fail therein; for in lieu thereof he ſhall find care and trouble, ſurfeiting and diſeaſe, weariſome ſatiety and bitter regret; being void of all true delight in his mind, and ſatisfaction in his conſcience; nothing here being able to furniſh ſolid and ſtable pleaſure.

If he fancieth ſafety, he deludeth himſelf: for how can he be ſafe, who is deſtitute of God's protection and ſuccour; who is the object of divine wrath and vengeance; who is aſſailed by many fierce and powerful enemies; whom the roaring lion is ready to devour; whom death and *ſudden deſtruction* are coming to ſeize upon; whom guilt threateneth, and hell gapeth for; who without any guard or fence ſtandeth expoſed to ſuch imminent, ſuch horrid and ghaſtly dangers? 1 Theſſ. v. 3. Prov. x. 29.

If he thirſt for liberty, he will be fruſtrated: for he can be no otherwiſe than a ſlave, while he continueth impious; *ſervus tot dominorum, quot vitiorum*, *a ſlave to ſo many maſters as he keepeth vices:* a ſlave to himſelf and his own luſts; carrying about with Auguſt. Prov. xxv. 28.

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SERM. X. him the fetters of unſatiable deſire, being hampered with inconſiſtent and irregular affections.

Eaſe he cannot obtain, being oppreſſed with unwieldy burthens of ſin, of care, of trouble; being toſſed with reſtleſs agitations of luſt and paſſion; being *like the troubled ſea, which cannot reſt, whoſe waters caſt up mire and dirt.* Iſa. lvii. 20.

If he meaneth to get wiſdom, he is out: for wiſdom and impiety are incompatible things. All his knowledge is vain, all his ſpeculations are no better than dreams, ſeeing he erreth in the main point, and is *not wiſe to ſalvation.*

He is, in fine, extremely miſtaken, and in all his projects will be lamentably diſappointed, whoever fancieth any true profit without piety: he never can attain to be ſo much as wealthy; but drudge and plod what he can, muſt be a beggar and a forlorn wretch. For how can he be any wiſe rich, who doth want all the beſt things, the only valuable things in the world, which any man may have, which any good man doth poſſeſs? How can he be rich, who is deſtitute of the moſt needful accommodations of life; who conſtantly feedeth on the coarſeſt and moſt ſordid fare, (the duſt of pelf, the dung of ſenſuality;) who hath no faithful or conſtant friends, (nothing earthly can be ſuch;) who is maſter of nothing but dirt, or chaff, or ſmoke? Whereas alſo riches do conſiſt, not in what one enjoyeth at preſent, (for that can be little) but in a preſumed ability to enjoy afterward what he may come to need or deſire; or in well-grounded hopes that he ſhall never fall into want or diſtreſs. How can that man be rich, who hath not any confidence in God, any intereſt in him, any reaſon to expect his bleſſing? yea, who hath much ground to fear the diſpleaſure of him, in whoſe hand all things are, and who arbitrarily diſpoſeth of all? Piety therefore is the only profitable thing, according to

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juſt eſteem. *She is more precious than rubies, and all the things we can deſire are not to be compared to her.* SERM. X.
Upon this account it is moſt true, what the Pſalmiſt affirmeth, *A little that the righteous hath is better than great riches of the ungodly.* Prov. iii. 15. Pſ. xxxvii. 16.

IV. That commendation is not to be omitted, which is neareſt at hand, and ſuggeſted by St. Paul himſelf, to back this aſſertion concerning the univerſal profitableneſs of piety; *For*, ſaith he, *it hath the promiſe of the life that now is, and of that which is to come:* that is, God hath promiſed to reward it with bleſſings appertaining to this mortal life, and with thoſe which concern the future eternal ſtate.

As for the bleſſings of this life, although God hath not promiſed to load the godly man with affluence of worldly things, not to put him into a ſplendid and pompous garb, not to diſpenſe to him that which may ſerve for pampering the fleſh, or gratifying wanton fancy, not to exempt him from all the inconveniences to which human nature and this worldly ſtate are ſubject; yet hath he promiſed to furniſh him with whatever is needful or convenient for him, in due meaſure and ſeaſon, the which he doth beſt underſtand. There is no good thing, which a man naturally deſireth, or reaſonably can wiſh for, which is not in expreſs terms propoſed as a reward, or a reſult of piety.

In general, it is declared, that *Bleſſings are upon the head of the juſt*; that, *No good thing God will withhold from them that walk uprightly*; that, whatever otherwiſe doth fall out, it *aſſuredly ſhall be well with them that fear God*; that, *Bleſſed is every one that feareth the Lord, that walketh in his ways:—happy ſhalt thou be, and it ſhall be well with thee*; that, *There ſhall no evil happen to the juſt*; that, *All things work together for good to them that love God.* Prov. x. 6. Deut. xxviii. 8. xxx. 9. Pſ. lxxxiv. 11. Eccleſ. viii. 12. Iſa. iii. 10. Pſ. cxxviii. 1, 2. (Prov. viii. 35.) Prov. xii. 21. Rom. viii. 28.

Particularly, there are promiſed to the pious man,

A ſupply of all wants. *The Lord will not ſuffer the ſoul of the righteous to famiſh. The righteous eateth to* Prov. x. 3.

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the ſatisfying of his ſoul. There is no want to them that fear God. The young lions do lack, and ſuffer hunger; but they that ſeek the Lord ſhall not want any good thing.

Prov. xiii. 25. Pſ. xxxiv. 9, 10. xxxiii. 18, 19. xxxvii. 3. 19. xxxiv. 20. cxii. 7. xxxvii. 28. xci. 10, 11.

A protection in all dangers. *The eye of the Lord is upon them that fear him, upon them that hope in his mercy; to deliver their ſoul from death, and to keep them alive in famine. There ſhall no evil befal thee, neither ſhall any plague come nigh thy dwelling: He ſhall give his angels charge over thee, to keep thee in all thy ways.*

Guidance in all his undertakings and proceedings.

Pſ. xxxvii. 23. 31. Prov. iii. 6. (Prov. xi. 3. 5. xvi. 3.)

The ſteps of a good man are ordered by the Lord—— none of his ſteps ſhall ſlide.——In all thy ways acknowledge him, and he ſhall direct thy paths.

Pſ. xxxvii. 5. i. 3. Job xxii. 28. Deut. xxviii. 8. 12.

Succeſs and proſperity in his deſigns. *Commit thy way unto the Lord; truſt alſo in him, and he ſhall bring it to paſs.——Whatſoever he doeth, it ſhall proſper.—— Thou ſhalt decree a thing, and it ſhall be eſtabliſhed; and the light ſhall ſhine upon thy ways. The Lord ſhall command a bleſſing upon thee in thy ſtore-houſes, and in all that thou ſetteſt thine hand unto. Thine expectations ſhall not be cut off.*

Prov. xxiii. 18.

Comfortable enjoying the fruits of his induſtry.

Pſ. cxxviii. 2.

——*Thou ſhalt eat the labour of thine hands.*

Prov. x. 24. Pſ. xxxvii. 4. Pſ. cxlv. 19.

Satisfaction of all reaſonable deſires. *The deſire of the righteous ſhall be granted. Delight thyſelf in the Lord, and he ſhall give thee the deſires of thine heart. He will fulfil the deſire of them that fear him: he will hear their cry, and will ſave them.*

Iſa. xxxii. 17. Pſal. cxix. 165. James iii. 18.

Firm peace and quiet. *The work of righteouſneſs ſhall be peace; and the effect of righteouſneſs, quietneſs and aſſurance for ever. Great peace have they which love thy law. The fruit of righteouſneſs is ſowed in peace.*

Pſal. xcvii. 11. Prov. xxix. 6.

Joy and alacrity. *Light is ſown for the righteous, and gladneſs for the upright in heart. In the tranſgreſſion of an evil man there is a ſnare: but the righteous doth ſing and rejoice.*

Pſ. cxlvii. 3. xxxi. 24.

Support and comfort in afflictions. *He healeth the broken in heart, and bindeth up their wounds. Be*

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of good courage, and be ſhall ſtrengthen your heart, all ye SERM. *that hope in the Lord.* X.

Deliverance from trouble. *Many are the afflictions of the righteous, but the Lord delivereth him out of them all. He keepeth all his bones, not one of them is broken.* Pſ. xxxiv. 19, 20.

Preſervation and recovery from miſhaps, or miſcarriages. *Though he fall, he ſhall not be utterly caſt down: for the Lord upholdeth him with his hand.* Pſ. xxxvii. 24.

Preferment of all ſorts, to honour and dignity, to wealth and proſperity. *Wait upon the Lord, and keep his way; and he ſhall exalt thee to inherit the land. By humility and fear of the Lord are riches and honour. Bleſſed is the man that feareth the Lord——wealth and riches are in his houſe. The upright ſhall have good things in poſſeſſion. If they obey and ſerve him, they ſhall ſpend their days in proſperity, and their years in pleaſure. The tabernacle of the righteous ſhall flouriſh.*

Long life. *The fear of the Lord prolongeth days. By me thy days ſhall be multiplied, and the years of thy life ſhall be increaſed. Let thine heart keep my commandments: For length of days, and long life, and peace ſhall they add unto thee.*

A good name enduring after death. *The memory of the juſt is bleſſed.*

Bleſſings entailed on poſterity. *His ſeed ſhall be mighty upon earth; the generation of the upright ſhall be bleſſed. The root of the righteous ſhall not be moved.*

Thus is a liberal diſpenſation even of temporal goods annexed by God's infallible word unto the practice of piety. It is indeed more frequently, abundantly, and explicitly promiſed unto God's ancient people, as being a conditional ingredient of the covenant made with them, exhibited in that as a recompenſe of their external performance of religious works preſcribed in their Law. The Goſpel doth not ſo clearly propound it, or ſo much inſiſt upon it, as not principally belonging to the evangelical covenant, the which, in reward to the performance of its conditions by us, peculiarly doth offer bleſſings ſpiritual,

Pſ. xxxvii. 14. Pſ. xxxiv. 19, 20. xxxvii. 39. Pſ. xxxvii. 24. Pſ. xxxvii. 34. Prov. xxii. 4. Pſ. cxii. 1. 3. Prov. xxviii. 10. (Job xxxvi. 7.) Job xxxvi. 11. Prov. xiv. 11. x. 27. Prov. ix. 11. Prov. iii. 1, 2. 16. Prov. x. 7. 25. Pſ. xxxvii. 26. cxii. 2. (Exod. xx. 6.) Prov. xii. 3. Prov. xi. 31. Deut. xxviii. 1. vii. 12. xi. 13.

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SERM. X. ritual, and relating to the future ſtate; as alſo ſcarce deſerving to be mentioned in compariſon to thoſe ſuperior bleſſings. Yet as the celeſtial benefits, although not openly tendered in the Jewiſh Law, were yet myſtically couched therein, and cloſely deſigned for the ſpiritual and hearty practiſers of religion; ſo is the collation of temporal accommodations to be underſtood to belong to all pious Chriſtians: there is a *codicil*, as it were, annexed to the New Teſtament, in which God ſignifieth his intention to furniſh his children with all that is needful or convenient for them. His providence hath not ceaſed to watch over us, his bounty doth not fail toward us even in this reſpect; his care will not be wanting to feed us and clothe us comfortably, to protect us from evil, to proſper our good undertakings. Hence doth he command us to care for nothing, but *to caſt our care upon him, to recommend our buſineſs to him, becauſe he careth for us*; he *will never forſake us*; he will hear our prayers, and help us. Hence we are enjoined *not to truſt in uncertain riches, but in the living God, who giveth us richly all things to enjoy*. Hence it is ſaid, that, *The divine power hath given us all things pertaining unto life and godlineſs, through the knowledge of him that hath called us to glory and virtue*. Hence it is promiſed by our Lord, that, *If we ſeek firſt the kingdom of God, all things ſhall be added to us*. Hence it is inferred, as conſequential to the nature of the evangelical diſpenſation, that we cannot want any good thing; *He*, ſaith St. Paul, *that ſpared not his own Son, but delivered him up for us all, how ſhall he not with him alſo freely give us all things?* In fine, hence it is propoſed as notorious, that nothing is permitted to fall out otherwiſe than as conduceth to our good. *We know*, ſaith St. Paul, *that all things work together for good unto thoſe that love God*: nor *will God*, in any caſe, *ſuffer us to be tempted*, by any want or preſſure, *beyond what we are able to bear*. Thus is piety evidently profitable, as *having the promiſes of this life*, or

2 Cor. 4. 17.
Rom. viii. 18.
1 Pet. v. 7.
Phil. iv. 6.
Heb. xiii. 5.
Matt. vi. 25.
1 Tim. vi. 17.
2 Pet. i. 3.
Matt. vi. 33.
Rom. viii. 32.
Rom. viii. 28.
1 Cor. x. 13.

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exhibiting all temporal bleſſings deſirable to the practiſers thereof. SERM. X.

But infinitely more profitable it is, as *having the promiſes of the future life*, or as procuring a title to thoſe incomparably more excellent bleſſings of the other world; thoſe *indefectible treaſures*, that *incorruptible, undefiled, and never-fading inheritance, reſerved in heaven for us*; that *exceeding weight of glory*; thoſe *ineffable joys of paradiſe*, that lightſome countenance and beatifying preſence of God; that unconceivably and unexpreſſibly joyful, glorious, perfect, and endleſs bliſs; briefly, all that is compriſed and intimated in thoſe words of the Apoſtle; *Eye hath not ſeen, nor ear heard, neither have entered into the heart of man the things which God hath prepared for them that love him.* Infinitely profitable ſurely muſt that be, which procureth thoſe things for us: and in theſe reſpects great reaſon had St. Paul to ſay, that *Godlineſs is profitable for all things.*

Luke xii. 33. 1 Pet. i. 4. 2 Cor. iv. 17. 1 Pet. i. 8. iv. 13. 1 Cor. ii. 9.

But farther to evidence and recommend this point, I might propound certain peculiar advantages ariſing from piety, which have a very general influence upon our lives, and do afford unto them exceeding benefit: but this I muſt, in regard to the time and your patience, at preſent forbear.

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SERMON XI.

The Profitableneſs of Godlineſs.

1 TIM. iv. 8.

——*But Godlineſs is profitable for all things.*

IN diſcourſing formerly upon theſe words, I did propound divers general conſiderations, ſerving to confirm and recommend this aſſertion of St. Paul. I ſhall now inſiſt upon ſome others more particular, which yet ſeem much conducible to the ſame purpoſe, declaring the vaſt utility of religion or piety. SERM. XI.

I. We may conſider, that religion doth preſcribe the trueſt and beſt rules of action; thence enlightening our mind, and rectifying our practice in all matters, and upon all occaſions, ſo that whatever is performed according to it is done well and wiſely, with a comely grace in regard to others, with a cheerful ſatisfaction in our own mind, with the beſt aſſurance, that things are here capable of, to find happy ſucceſs and beneficial fruit.

Of all things in the world there is nothing more generally profitable than light: by it we converſe with the world, and have all things ſet before us; by it we truly and eaſily diſcern things in their right magnitude, ſhape, and colour; by it we guide our ſteps ſafely in proſecution of what is good, and ſhunning

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ſhunning what is noxious; by it our ſpirits are comfortably warmed and cheered, our life conſequently, our health, our vigour, and activity are preſerved. The like benefits doth religion, which is the light of our ſoul, yield to it. Pious men are *children of the light*; pious works are works of light *ſhining before men.* *God's Word* (or true religion) *is a lamp unto our feet, and a light unto our path*; enabling us to perceive things, and judge rightly of them; teaching us to walk ſtraightly and ſurely, without erring or ſtumbling; qualifying us to embrace what is uſeful, and to avoid hurtful things; preſerving our ſpiritual life, and diſpoſing us to act well with a vigorous alacrity: without it a man is ſtark blind, and utterly benighted, *gropeth* in doubt, wandereth in miſtake, trippeth upon all occaſions, and often falleth into miſchief. *The path of the juſt*, ſaith the Wiſe Man, *is as the ſhining light. The way of the wicked is as darkneſs, they know not at what they ſtumble. Righteouſneſs keepeth him that is upright in the way; but wickedneſs overthroweth the ſinner.*

Luke xvi. 8. Eph. v. 8. 1 Theſſ. v. 5. John xii. 36. Matt. v. 16. Eph. v. 11. Pſal. cxix. 105. Iſ. lix. 10. Job v. 14. Deut. xxviii. 29. Prov. iv. 18, 19. Prov. xiii. 6. xi. 3. 5.

Again: it is a fair ornament of a man, and a grand convenience both to himſelf and to others, with whom he converſeth or dealeth, to act regularly, uniformly, and conſiſtently; freeing a man's ſelf from diſtraction and irreſolution in his mind, from change and confuſion in his proceedings; ſecuring others from deluſion and diſappointment in their tranſactions with him. [a] Even a bad rule conſtantly obſerved is therefore better than none: order and perſeverance in any way ſeemeth more convenient than roving and toſſing about in uncertainties. But, ſecluding a regard to the precepts of religion, there can hardly be any ſure or ſettled rule, which firmly can engage a man to, or effectually reſtrain a man from any thing.

[a] Via eunti aliquid extremum eſt; error immenſus eſt. *Sen. Ep.* 16.

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There is ſcarce in nature any thing ſo wild, ſo untractable, ſo unintelligible, as a man who hath no bridle of conſcience to guide or check him. A profane man is like a ſhip, without anchor to ſtay him, or rudder to ſteer him, or compaſs to guide him; ſo that he is toſſed with any wind, and driven with any wave, none knoweth whither; whither bodily temper doth ſway him, or paſſion doth hurry him, or intereſt doth pull him, or example leadeth him, or company inveigleth and haleth him, or humour tranſporteth him; whither any ſuch variable and unaccountable cauſes determine him, or divers of them together diſtract him; whence he ſo rambleth and hovereth, that he can ſeldom himſelf tell what in any caſe he ſhould do, nor can another gueſs it; ſo that you cannot at any time know where to find him, or how to deal with him: you cannot with reaſon ever rely upon him, ſo *unſtable is he in all his ways* [b]. He is in effect a mere child, all humour and giddineſs, ſomewhat worſe than a beaſt, which, following the inſtinct of its nature, is conſtant and regular, and thence tractable; or at leaſt ſo untractable, that no man will be deceived in meddling with him. Nothing therefore can be more unmanly than ſuch a perſon, nothing can be more unpleaſant than to have to do with him.

But a pious man, being ſteadily governed by conſcience, and a regard to certain principles, doth both underſtand himſelf and is intelligible to others: he preſently deſcrieth what in any caſe he is to do, and can render an account of his acting: you may know him clearly, and aſſuredly tell what he will do, and may therefore fully confide in him [c].

What therefore law and government are to the

[b] Nihil eſt tam occupatum, tam multiforme, tot ac tam variis affectibus conciſum atque laceratum, quam mala mens. *Quint.* xii. 1.

[c] Οἱ ἐπιεικεῖς ἑαυτοῖς ὁμολογοῦσι καὶ ἀλλήλοις, ἐπὶ τῶν αὐτῶν ὄντες, ὡς εἰπεῖν· τῶν τοιούτων μένει γὰρ τὰ βελήματα, καὶ ὃ μετοχέζει, ἔστιν εὔροπος. *Ariſt. Eth.* ix. 6.

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SERM. XI. public, things neceſſary to preſerve the world in order, peace, and ſafety, (that men may know what to do, and diſtinguiſh what is their own,) that is piety to each man's private ſtate, and to ordinary converſation: it freeth a man's own life from diſorder and diſtraction; it prompteth men how to behave themſelves toward one another with ſecurity and confidence.

This it doth by confining our practice within ſettled bounds: but this advantage appeareth greater, conſidering that the rules which it preſcribeth are the beſt that can be. Such they muſt needs be, as proceeding from infallible wiſdom and immenſe goodneſs; being indeed no other than laws, which the all-wiſe and moſt gracious Lord and Maker of the world, out of tender kindneſs to his ſubjects and creatures, with eſpecial regard to our welfare, hath been pleaſed to enact and declare. What of old he ſaid to the Iſraelites concerning their laws, may with greater advantage be applied to thoſe, which ſhould regulate our lives: *And now, Iſrael, what doth the Lord thy God require of thee, but to fear the Lord thy God, to walk in all his ways, and to love him, and to ſerve the Lord thy God with all thy heart, and with all thy ſoul; to keep the commandments of the Lord, and his ſtatutes, which I command thee this day for thy good?* (For thy good; that was the deſign of their being commanded; thereto the obſervance of them did tend.) And that commendation, which by the Levites in Nehemiah is given to that, doth more clearly and fully agree to the Chriſtian (general and perfect) inſtitution: *Thou cameſt down from mount Sinai, and ſpakeſt with them from heaven, and gaveſt them right judgments, and true laws, good ſtatutes and commandments.* And, *The law*, ſaith the Apoſtle Paul, *is holy, the commandment is holy, juſt, and good:* as ſuch it is recommended to us by its Author, ſo we Chriſtians are by many great arguments aſſured that it is, and that it is ſuch even our natural reaſon dictateth; ſo (as

Deut. x. 12, 13.

Neh. ix. 13.

Rom. vii. 12.

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(as to the chief inſtances thereof) the moſt wiſe and ſober men always have acknowledged, ſo the general conſent doth avow, and ſo even common experience doth atteſt. For, heartily to love and reverence the Maker of all things, who by every thing apparent before us demonſtrateth himſelf incomprehenſibly powerful, wiſe, and good, to be kind and charitable to our neighbours, to be juſt and faithful in our dealings, to be ſober and modeſt in our minds, to be meek and gentle in our demeanours, to be ſtaunch and temperate in our enjoyments, and the like principal rules of duty, are ſuch, that the common reaſon of men and continual experience do approve them as hugely conducible to the public good of men, and to each man's private welfare. So notoriouſly beneficial they appear, that for the juſtification of them we might appeal even to the judgment and conſcience of thoſe perſons, who are moſt concerned to derogate from them. For hardly can any man be ſo ſenſeleſs, or ſo lewd, as ſeriouſly to diſapprove or condemn them, as inwardly to blame or ſlight thoſe who truly act according to them. The will of men ſometimes may be ſo depraved, that diſſolute perſons wantonly and heedleſsly may ſcoff at and ſeem to diſparage goodneſs; that good men by very bad men for doing well may be envied and hated: (their being ſo treated is commonly an argument of the goodneſs of their perſons and of their ways:) but the underſtanding of men can hardly be ſo corrupted, that piety, charity, juſtice, temperance, meekneſs, can in good earneſt conſiderately by any man be diſallowed, or that perſons apparently practiſing them can be deſpiſed; but rather, in ſpite of all contrary prejudice and diſaffections, ſuch things and ſuch perſons cannot but in judgment and heart be eſteemed by all men. The luſtre of them by a natural and neceſſary efficacy (like that of heaven's glorious light) dazzleth the ſight and charmeth the ſpirits of all men living; the beauty of them irreſiſt-

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SERM. XI. ibly conquereth and commandeth in the apprehenſions of men: the more they are obſerved, the more uſeful and needful they appear for the good of men; all the fruits which grow from the obſervance of them being to all men's taſte very pleaſant, to all men's experience very wholeſome. Indeed, all the good, whereby common life is adorned, is ſweetened, is rendered pleaſant and deſirable, doth ſpring thence; all the miſchiefs, which infeſt particular men, and which diſturb the world, palpably do ariſe from the tranſgreſſion or neglect thereof.

If we look on a perſon ſticking to thoſe rules, we ſhall perceive him to have a cheerful mind and compoſed paſſions, to be at peace within, and ſatisfied with himſelf; to live in comely order, in good repute, in fair correſpondence, and firm concord with his neighbours. If we mark what preſerveth the body ſound and luſty, what keepeth the mind vigorous and briſk, what ſaveth and improveth the eſtate, what upholdeth the good name, what guardeth and graceth a man's whole life; it is nothing elſe but proceeding in our demeanour and dealings according to the honeſt and wiſe rules of piety. If we view a place where theſe commonly in good meaſure are obſerved, we ſhall diſcern, that peace and proſperity do flouriſh there; that all things proceed on ſweetly and fairly; that men generally drive on converſation and commerce together contentedly, delightfully, advantageouſly, yielding friendly advice and aid, mutually ſtriving to render one another happy; that few clamours or complaints are heard there, few contentions or ſtirs do appear, few diſaſters or tragedies do occur; that ſuch a place hath indeed much of the face, much of the ſubſtance of Paradiſe.

But if you mind a perſon who neglecteth them, you will find his mind galled with ſore remorſe, racked with anxious fears and doubts, agitated with ſtorms of paſſion and luſt, living in diſorder and diſgrace, jarring

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jarring with others, and no leſs diſſatisfied with himſelf. If you obſerve what doth impair the health, doth weaken and fret the mind, doth waſte the eſtate, doth blemiſh the reputation, doth expoſe the whole life to danger and trouble; what is it but thwarting theſe good rules? If you conſider a place where theſe are much neglected, it will appear like a wilderneſs of ſavage beaſts, or a ſtye of foul ſwine, or a hell of curſed fiends; full of roaring and tearing, of factions and feuds, of diſtractions and confuſions, of pitiful objects, of doleful moans, of tragical events. Men are there wallowing in filth, wildly revelling, bickering and ſquabbling, defaming, circumventing, diſturbing and vexing one another; as if they affected nothing more than to render one another as miſerable as they can. It is from luſt and luxury, from ambition and avarice, from envy and ſpite, and the like diſpoſitions, which religion chiefly doth interdict, that all ſuch horrid miſchiefs do ſpring. SERM. XI.

In fine, the precepts of religion are no other than ſuch as phyſicians would preſcribe for the health of our bodies, as politicians would avow needful for the peace of the ſtate, as Epicurean philoſophers do recommend for the tranquillity of our mind, and pleaſure of our lives; ſuch as common reaſon dictateth, and daily trial ſheweth conducible to our welfare in all reſpects: which conſequently, were there no law exacting them of us, we ſhould in wiſdom chooſe to obſerve, and voluntarily impoſe on ourſelves, confeſſing them to be fit matters of law, as moſt advantageous and requiſite to the good, general and particular, of mankind. So that what Plutarch reporteth Solon to have ſaid, that *he had ſo ſquared his laws to the citizens, that all of them might clearly perceive, that to obſerve them was more for their benefit and intereſt, than to violate them*, is far more true concerning the divine laws. Plut. in Sol.

II. We may conſider more particularly, that piety

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SERM. XI. yieldeth to the practiſer all kind of interior content, peace, and joy; freeth him from all kinds of diſſatisfaction, regret, and diſquiet; which is an ineſtimably great advantage: for certainly the happineſs and miſery of men are wholly or chiefly ſeated and founded in the mind. If that is in a good ſtate of health, reſt, and cheerfulneſs, whatever the perſon's outward condition or circumſtances be, he cannot be wretched; if that be diſtempered, or diſturbed, he cannot be happy. For what if a man ſeem very poor; if he be abundantly ſatisfied in his own poſſeſſions and enjoyments? What if he taſteth not the pleaſures of ſenſe; if he enjoyeth purer and ſweeter delights of mind? What if tempeſts of fortune ſurround him; if his mind be calm and ſerene? What if he have few or no friends; if he yet be throughly in peace and amity with himſelf, and can delightfully converſe with his own thoughts? What if men ſlight, cenſure, or revile him; if he doth value his own ſtate, doth approve his own actions, doth acquit himſelf of blame in his own conſcience? Such external contingencies can ſurely no more prejudice a man's real happineſs, than winds bluſtering abroad can harm or trouble him that abideth in a good room within doors, than ſtorms and fluctuations at ſea can moleſt him who ſtandeth firm upon the ſhore. On the other hand, the greateſt affluence of ſeeming goods will avail nothing, if real content of mind be wanting. For what will the higheſt eminence of outward ſtate import to him that is dejected in his own conceit? What if the world court and bleſs him, or if all people do admire and applaud him; if he be diſpleaſed with, if he condemneth, if he deſpiſeth himſelf? What if the weather look fair and bright without, if ſtorms rage in his breaſt, if black clouds do overcaſt his ſoul? What if he do abound with friends, and enjoy peace abroad; if he find diſtraction at home, and is at cruel variance with

Prov. xviii. 4.

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with himſelf? How can a man enjoy any ſatisfac- SERM.
tion, or reliſh any pleaſure, while ſore remorſe doth XI.
ſting him, or ſolicitous doubts and fears do rack him[d]?

Now that from the practice of religion, and from it alone, ſuch inward content and pleaſure do ſpring; that it only miniſtereth reaſon of content, and diſpoſeth the mind to enjoy it; that it extirpateth the grounds and roots of diſcontent; that it is the only mother of true, ſober alacrity and tranquillity of mind, will, upon conſidering things, be manifeſt.

There is no other thing here in this world, that can yield any ſolid or ſtable content to our mind. For all preſent enjoyments are tranſient and evanid; and of any future thing, in this kingdom of change Prov. xxvii. 24.
and contingency, there can be no aſſurance. There is nothing below large enough to fill our vaſt capa- Prov. xxvii. 20.
cities, or to ſatiate our boundleſs deſires, or to appeaſe our ſqueamiſh delicacy. There is nothing, whoſe ſweetneſs we do not preſently exhauſt and ſuck dry; whereof thence we do not ſoon grow weary, quite loathing, or faintly liking it. There is not any thing, which is not ſlippery and fleeting; ſo that we can for a long time hope to poſſeſs it, or for any time can enjoy it, without reſtleſs care in keeping it, and anxious fear of loſing it. Nothing there is, in the purſuance, the cuſtody, the defence, and maintenance whereof we are not liable to diſappointments and croſſes. Nothing conſequently there is productive of any ſound content to the faſtidious, impatient, greedy, and reſtleſs heart of man. The greateſt confluence of preſent, corporeal, ſecular things (of all the health, the riches, the dignity, the power, the friendſhips and dependencies, the wit, the learning and wiſdom, the reputation and renown

[d] *Chryſtom. in Rom.* i. *Or.* 1. Εὐθυμίαν γὰρ καὶ χαρὰν οὐκ ἀρχῆς μέγεθος, οὐ χρημάτων πλῆθος, οὐ δυναστείας ὄγκος, οὐκ ἰσχὺς σώματος, οὐ πολυτέλεια τραπέζης, οὐχ ἱματίων κόσμος, οὐκ ἄλλο τι τῶν ἀνθρωπίνων ποιεῖν εἴωθεν, ἀλλ' ἡ κατόρθωμα μόνον πνευματικὸν, καὶ συνειδὸς ἀγαθόν.

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SERM. XI. in this world) will not afford much of it: which yet is but an imaginary ſuppoſition; for in effect hardly do all ſuch accommodations of life concur in any ſtate. There is ever ſome *dead fly* in our box, which Eccleſ. x. 1. marreth our ointment; ſome adherent inconvenience, which ſoureth the guſt of our enjoyments: there is always ſome good thing abſent, which we do want, or long for; ſome ill thing preſent, or in proſpect, which we abhor, would avoid, do fear may come. If, therefore, we would find content, we muſt not ſeek it here; we muſt want it, or have it from another world: it muſt come hither from heaven, and thence only piety can fetch it down. This, inſtead of theſe unſatisfying, uncertain, and unſtable things, ſupplieth us with goods adequate to our moſt outſtretched wiſhes, infallibly ſure, inceſſantly durable; *an indefectible treaſure, an incorruptible inheritance, an unſhakeable kingdom*, a perfect and endleſs joy, capable to repleniſh the vaſteſt heart: which he that hath a good title to, or a confident hope of, how can he be otherwiſe than extremely pleaſed, than fully content? It aſſureth the favour and friendſhip of God, of him that is abſolute lord and diſpoſer of all things: the which he that hath, and confideth in, what can he want or wiſh more? what can he fear? what can annoy or diſmay him? what can happen to him worthy to be deemed evil or ſad? What is poverty to him, for whom God is concerned to provide? What is diſgrace to him, that hath the regard and approbation of God? What is danger to him, whom God continually protecteth? What can any diſtreſs work on him, whom God doth comfort, and will relieve? What is any thing to him, who is ſenſible that all things are purpoſely diſpoſed to him by that Wiſdom which perfectly knoweth what is beſt; by that Goodneſs which entirely loveth him? In fine, he that is conſcious to himſelf of being well-affected in mind, and acting the beſt way, who is ſatisfied in the ſtate of his ſoul, ſecure from God's diſpleaſure, and

Θησαυὸν... ἀνέκλειπτον, κληρονομίαν ἐφθαρτον, βασιλείαν σάλευτον.

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and hopeful of his favour, what can make any grievous impreſſion on him? What other affections than ſuch as are moſt grateful and pleaſant can lodge in his ſoul? Joy and peace have natural ſeeds in ſuch a mind, and neceſſarily muſt ſpring up there; in proportion, I mean, and according to the degrees of piety reſident therein. SERM. XI.

The Epicureans did conceit and boaſt, that having, by their atheiſtical explications of natural effects and common events here, diſcarded the belief and dread of religion, they had laid a ſtrong foundation for tranquillity of mind, had driven away all the cauſes of grief and fear, ſo that nothing then remained troubleſome or terrible unto us; and conſequently, what, ſaid they, could forbid, but that we ſhould be entirely contented, glad, and happy?—*Nos exæquat victoria cælo*; no God then ſurely could be more happy than we. But their attempt in many reſpects was vain and lame. They preſumed of a victory which it is impoſſible to obtain: and ſuppoſing they had got it, their triumph would not have been ſo glorious, their ſucceſs would not have been ſo great, as they pretended. For ſeeing no Epicurean diſcourſe can baffle the potent arguments which perſuade religion; (thoſe arguments, which the viſible conſtitution of nature, the current tradition of all ages, the general conſent of men, the pregnant atteſtations of hiſtory and experience concerning ſupernatural and miraculous events, do afford;) ſince the being and providence of God have proofs ſo clear and valid, that no ſubtlety of man can ſo far evade them, as not to be ſhaken with them, as wholly to be freed from doubt and ſuſpicion of their truth; ſince there can be no means of evincing the negative part in thoſe queſtions to be true or probable; it is impoſſible that any conſidering man, in this cauſe againſt religion, ſhould ſuppoſe himſelf to have acquired an abſolute and ſecure victory, or that he ſhould reap ſubſtantial fruit of comfort thence.

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SERM. XI. thence. It cannot be, that any man ſhould enjoy any perfect quiet, without acting ſo as to get ſome good hope of avoiding thoſe dreadful miſchiefs, which religion threateneth to the tranſgreſſors of its precepts. Were there indeed but reaſon enough to ſtir, if not to ſtagger, an infidel; were it ſomewhat dubious whether, yea, were it great odds that there are not reſerved any puniſhments for impiety, as indeed there is, if not the perfecteſt aſſurance imaginable, yet vaſt advantage on the contrary ſide; were there but any ſmall reaſon for a judgment to come, as there are apparently very many and great ones; had moſt men conſpired in denying Providence, as ever generally they have conſented in avowing it; were there a pretence of miracles for eſtabliſhing the mortality and impunity of ſouls, as there have been numberleſs ſtrongly teſtified by good witneſſes and great events, to confirm the oppoſite doctrines; did moſt wiſe and ſober men judge in favour of irreligion, as commonly they ever did and ſtill do otherwiſe; yet wiſdom would require that men ſhould chooſe to be pious, ſince otherwiſe no man can be throughly ſecure. It is a wildneſs, not to dread the leaſt poſſibility of incurring ſuch horrible miſchiefs: any hazard of ſuch importance cannot but ſtartle a man in his wits. To be in the leaſt obnoxious to eternal torments, if men would think upon it as men, (that is, as rational and provident creatures) could not but diſturb them. And indeed ſo it is in experience; for whatever they ſay, or ſeem, all atheiſts and profane men are inwardly ſuſpicious and fearful; they care not to die, and would gladly eſcape the trial of what ſhall follow death. But let us grant or imagine the Epicurean ſucceſsful as he could wiſh in this enterpriſe of ſubduing religion: yet except therewith he can alſo trample down reaſon, new mould human nature, ſubjugate all natural appetites and paſſions, alter the ſtate of things here, and transform the world, he will yet in the greateſt part fail of his conceited

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ceited advantages; very ſhort he will fall of triumph- SERM.
ing in a contented and quiet mind. That which ac- XI.
crueth thence will at moſt be no more than ſome ne-
gative content, or a partial indolency, ariſing from his being reſcued from ſome particular cares and fears; which exceedeth not the tranquillity of a beaſt, or the ſtupidity of one that is out of his ſenſes: that is all he can claim, which yet is more than he can ever compaſs. For he cannot be as a beaſt, or a mere ſot, if he would: reaſon, reflecting on preſent evils, and boding others future, will afflict him; his own unſatiable deſires, unavoidable fears, and untameable paſſions, will diſquiet him. Were the other world quite out of his faith, or his thought, yet this world would yield trouble ſufficient to render him void of any ſteady reſt, or ſolid joy. All men ever have, and ever will complain, that the burthens, croſſes, ſatiates of this life, do much ſurpaſs the conveniences and comforts of it. So that, were no other to be expected or feared, this of itſelf would become grievous and nauſeous; we ſhould ſoon have enough or too much of it, without a ſupport and ſupply from other-where. In the largeſt affluence of things, in the deepeſt calm of our ſtate, we are apt to nauſeate, and are weary even of our proſperity itſelf; the which indeed commonly hath ingredients not only ſomewhat unſavoury, but very bitter and loathſome. We may add, that had thoſe profane attempters quite baniſhed religion, they with it muſt have driven away all the benefits and comforts of it: which, even ſuppoſing them but imaginary, are yet the greateſt, which common life doth need, or can deſire: with it they would ſend packing juſtice, fidelity, charity, ſobriety, and all ſolid virtue, things which cannot firmly ſubſiſt without conſcience: which being gone, human life would be the moſt diſorderly, moſt unſafe, moſt wretched and contemptible thing that can be; nothing but inſipid and flaſhy ſenſualities would be left behind to comfort

Non tempeſtate vexor, ſed nauſea. *Senec. de Tranq. An.* 1.

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SERM. XI. fort a man with; and thoſe hardly any man (by reaſon of competitions and contentions for them, no wiſe reſtrainable) could enjoy quietly or ſafely. It is therefore piety alone, which, by raiſing hopes of bleſſings and joys incomparably ſuperior to any here, that cannot be taken from us, can lay any ground of true content, of ſubſtantial and poſitive content; ſuch as conſiſteth not only in removing the objects and cauſes of vexatious paſſions, but in employing the moſt pleaſant affections (love, hope, joy,) with a delightful complacence upon their proper and moſt noble objects. *The kingdom of God* (and that only, no other kingdom hath that privilege) *conſiſteth in righteouſneſs* (firſt, then in) *peace and ſpiritual joy.* No philoſopher, with truth and reaſon, can make that overture to us, which our Lord doth: *Come unto me, all ye that are weary and heavy laden, and ye ſhall find reſt to your ſouls.* Out of religion there can be no aphoriſm pretended, like to that of the Prophet: *Thou ſhalt keep him in perfect peace, whoſe mind is ſtayed on thee.*

Rom. xiv. 17.

Matt. xi. 28.

Iſa. xxvi. 3.

If, indeed, we diſtinctly ſurvey all the grounds and ſources of content, it will appear that religion only can afford it.

Doth it reſult from a well governing and ordering our paſſions? Then it is plain, that only a pious man is capable thereof; for piety only can effect that; it alone, with the powerful aid of Divine grace, doth guide our paſſions by exact rules, doth ſet them upon worthy objects, doth temper and tune them in juſt harmony, doth ſeaſonably curb and check them, doth rightly correct and reform them [c].

This no bare reaſon (which naturally is ſo dim and ſo feeble in man) can achieve; much leſs can unreaſonableneſs do it, which is ever prevalent in

[c] Mala mens—cum inſidiatur, ſpe, curis, labore diſtringitur; et jam cum ſceleris compos fuerit, ſolicitudine, pœnitentia, pœnarum omnium expectatione torquetur. *Quint.* xii. 1.

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irreligious perſons. Their paſſions do ever run wildly and at random, in no good pace, within no good compaſs, toward the meaneſt and baſeſt objects; whence they can have no reſt or quiet in their minds. As they are conſtantly offending, ſo will they ever be puniſhing themſelves with inteſtine broils and conflicts, with diſſatisfactions and regrets. Hence, *There is no peace to the wicked. He is like the troubled ſea, which cannot reſt.* God, as St. Auſtin ſpeaketh, *hath ſaid it, and ſo it is, Every inordinate mind is a puniſhment to itſelf*[f]. SERM. XI. Iſa. xlviii. 22. lvii. 20.

Doth content ſpring from a hearty approbation of, or a complacence in, a man's own actions; from reflection that he conſtantly doth act according to reaſon and wiſdom, to juſtice and duty? Then can the pious man alone pretend to it, who knoweth that he walketh *inoffenſively toward God and man*; that he conſulteth his own beſt intereſt and welfare; that aſſuredly no bad conſequence can attend his unblameable behaviour; that moſt wiſe men have declared their approbation of his proceedings; that if he prove in his chief deſign miſtaken, yet no miſchief can thence befall him; yea, that he is not thereby quite diſappointed, ſeeing even much preſent ſatisfaction and convenience do ariſe up to him from his practice[g].

Doth content grow from a ſound and healthful conſtitution of ſoul? It is the pious man alone that hath that, whoſe mind is clear from diſtempers of vice and paſſion. The impious man is infirm, out of order, full of diſeaſe and pain, according to the Prophet's deſcription of him;—*The whole head is* Iſa. i. 5, 6.

[f] Nulla major pœna nequitiæ eſt, quam quod ſibi ac ſuis diſplicet. *Sen. Ep.* 42.

Τιμωρία πᾶσης ἀδικίας ἀκόλαθος. *Plat. de Leg.* 5.

Deus juſſit, et ita eſt, Sibi pœna eſt omnis inordinatus animus. *Aug. Conf.*

[g] Niſi ſapienti ſua non placent: omnis ſtultitia laborat faſtidio ſui. *Sen. Ep.* 9.

ſick,

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ſick, and the whole heart faint: from the ſole of the foot even unto the head there is no ſoundneſs in it, but wounds, and bruiſes, and putrefying ſores.

Doth content ariſe ſpecially from good ſucceſs in our attempts, or from proſperous events befalling us? Then it is the pious man, who is moſt capable thereof: for he only is ſecure, that what ſeemeth good and proſperous is really ſuch to him, as meant for his good by the Divine goodneſs, as tending thereto by the guidance of infallible wiſdom. As he only hath ground to hope for ſucceſs, becauſe he confideth in God, becauſe he dutifully ſeeketh God's help, becauſe God is favourably diſpoſed toward him, becauſe God *ordereth his ſteps*, becauſe God is by promiſe engaged to bleſs him, becauſe he is conſcious of intentions to render God thanks and praiſe for it, to employ his ſucceſs to God's honour and ſervice: ſo he only can be ſatisfied with the appearance of ſucceſs, being able with aſſurance to ſay after St. Paul, *We know that to thoſe who love God all things cooperate for good.*

Rom. viii. 28.

Is ſecurity from danger, from trouble, from want, from all evil, a ſource or matter of content? It certainly doth attend the pious man; God being his eſpecial protector, his comforter, his purveyor. *There ſhall no evil befall the juſt: There ſhall no plague come near his dwelling. God keepeth all his bones, not one of them is broken. He delivereth the righteous out of their troubles. The deſire of the righteous ſhall be granted. There is no want to them that fear God.* So do the holy oracles aſſure us.

Prov. xii. 21. Pſ. xci. 10. xxxiv. 20. 17. Prov. x. 24. Pſ. xxxiv. 9.

Doth contentedneſs ſpring from ſufficiency, real or apprehended? This appertaineth peculiarly to the pious man: for having God, the maſter of all, for *his portion*, he hath the richeſt eſtate that can be; he hath all that he can deſire, he cannot but take himſelf to have enough. Hence, *Godlineſs with contentedneſs* (μετ' αὐταρκείας, *with ſufficiency*) *is*, as St. Paul ſaith, μέγας πορισμὸς, *the great way of gaining*. He ſaith

1 Tim. vi. 6.

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ſaith it not, as ſuppoſing godlineſs and contented- SERM.
neſs to be ſeparable; but rather, as implying godli- XI.
neſs therefore to be moſt gainful, becauſe ſufficiency
and contentedneſs do ever attend it. In fine, if that ſaying of Seneca be true, that, *If to any man the things he poſſeſſeth do not ſeem moſt ample, although he be maſter of the whole world, he is yet miſerable* [h]; then aſſuredly the pious man only can be happy; for to him alone his poſſeſſions can ſeem the largeſt and beſt, ſuch as there can be no poſſible acceſſion to, or amendment of. For nothing can be greater or better than God, in whom he hath a ſtedfaſt propriety, whoſe infinite power and wiſdom are engaged to do him the utmoſt good that he is capable of. And farther:

III. Seeing we have mentioned happineſs, or the *ſummum bonum*, the utmoſt ſcope of human deſire, we do add, that piety doth ſurely confer it. Happineſs, whatever it be, hath certainly an eſſential coherence with piety. Theſe are reciprocal propoſitions, both of them infallibly true; he that is pious is happy; and, he that is happy is pious. No man doth undertake or proſecute any thing, which he doth not apprehend in ſome order or degree conducing to that which all men under a confuſed notion regard and tend to, which they call happineſs, the higheſt good, the chiefeſt deſirable thing. But in their judgments about this thing, or the means of attaining it, as men diſſent much, ſo of neceſſity moſt of them muſt be miſtaken. Moſt, indeed, do aim and ſhoot at a mere ſhadow of profit, or at that which is very little conſiderable, and in compariſon nothing at all; which little conduceth to the perfection of their nature, or the ſatisfaction of their deſire. If they miſs the mark, they are diſappointed; if they hit it, they are no leſs, and in effect hit nothing. But whatever this grand matter is, in whatever it conſiſteth, how-

[h] Si cui ſua non videntur ampliſſima, licet totius mundi dominus ſit, tamen miſer eſt. *Sen. Ep.* 9.

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SERM. XI. ever it be procured; be it the poſſeſſion and fruition of ſome ſpecial choice goods, or an aggregation, an affluence of all goods; piety ſurely is the main ingredient and principal cauſe thereof. All other goods without it are inſignificant and unuſeful thereto; and it cannot be wanting where piety is. Be a man never ſo rich, ſo powerful, ſo learned and knowing, ſo proſperous in his affairs, ſo honourable in the opinions and affections of men; yet nowiſe happy can he be, if he is not pious; being he wanteth the beſt goods, and is ſubject to the worſt evils; being he wanteth the love and favour of God; he wanteth peace and ſatisfaction of conſcience; he wanteth a right enjoyment of preſent things; he wanteth ſecurity concerning his final welfare. Be he never ſo poor, ſo low in the eyes of men, ſo forlorn and deſtitute of worldly conveniencies; yet if he be pious, he cannot be wretched: for he hath an intereſt in goods incomparably moſt precious, and is ſafe from all conſiderable evils; he hath a free reſort to the inexhauſtible fountain of all happineſs; he hath a right to immenſe and endleſs felicity, the which eminently containeth all the goods we are capable of; he is poſſeſſed thereof in hope, and certain reverſion; there is but a moment to paſs before his complete fruition of it. The want of all other petty things no more can maim the integrity of his felicity, than cutting the hair, or paring the nails, do mutilate a man: all other things are but ſuperfluities or excreſcences in regard to the conſtitution of happineſs. Whatever happeneth, that will aſſuredly be true, which is ſo much inculcated in holy Scripture, *Bleſſed is every one that feareth the Lord, that walketh in his ways; happy ſhall he be, and it ſhall be well with him.* Piety is indeed fraught with beatitudes, every part thereof yieldeth peculiar bleſſedneſs. To the love of God, to charity toward our neighbour, to purity of heart, to meekneſs, to humility, to patience, to mercifulneſs, to peaceableneſs, beatitude is aſcribed

Pſ. cxxviii. 1, 2. cxii. 1.

Matt. v.

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aſcribed by our Lord, the great judge and diſpenſer of it. Each religious performance hath happy fruits growing from it, and bliſsful rewards aſſigned thereto. All pious diſpoſitions are fountains of pleaſant ſtreams, which by their confluence do make up a full ſea of felicity. SERM. XI.

IV. It is a peculiar advantage of piety, that it furniſheth employment fit for us, worthy of us, hugely grateful, and highly beneficial to us. Man is a very buſy and active creature, which cannot live and do nothing, whoſe thoughts are in reſtleſs motion, whoſe deſires are ever ſtretching at ſomewhat, who perpetually will be working either good or evil to himſelf: wherefore greatly profitable muſt that thing be, which determineth him to act well, to ſpend his care and pain on that which is truly advantageous to him; and that is Religion only. It alone faſteneth our thoughts, affections, and endeavours upon occupations worthy the dignity of our nature, ſuiting the excellency of our natural capacities and endowments, tending to the perfection and advancement of our reaſon, to the enriching and ennobling of our ſouls. Secluding that, we have nothing in the world to ſtudy, to affect, to purſue, not very mean and below us, not very baſe and miſbecoming us, as men of reaſon and judgment. What have we to do but to eat and drink, like horſes or like ſwine; but to ſport and play, like children or apes; but to bicker and ſcuffle about trifles and impertinences, like idiots? what, but to ſcrape or ſcramble for uſeleſs pelf, to hunt after empty ſhews and ſhadows of honour, or the vain fancies and dreams of men? what, but to wallow or baſk in ſordid pleaſures, the which ſoon degenerate into remorſe and bitterneſs? To which ſort of employments were a man confined, what a pitiful thing would he be, and how inconſiderable were his life! Were a man deſigned only, like a fly, to buz about here for a time, ſucking in the air, and licking

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SERM. XI. the dew, then ſoon to vaniſh back into nothing, or to be transformed into worms; how ſorry and deſpicable a thing were he! And ſuch without religion we ſhould be. But it ſupplieth us with buſineſs of a moſt worthy nature and lofty importance; it ſetteth us upon doing things great and noble as can be; it engageth us to free our minds from all fond conceits, and cleanſe our hearts from all corrupt affections; to curb our brutiſh appetites, to tame our wild paſſions, to correct our perverſe inclinations, to conform the diſpoſitions of our ſoul and the actions of our life to the eternal laws of righteouſneſs and goodneſs: it putteth us upon the imitation of God, and aiming at the reſemblance of his perfections; upon obtaining a friendſhip and maintaining a correſpondence with the High and Holy One; upon fitting our minds for converſation and ſociety with the wiſeſt and pureſt ſpirits above; upon providing for an immortal ſtate, upon the acquiſt of joy and glory everlaſting. It employeth us in the divineſt actions, of promoting virtue, of performing beneficence, of ſerving the public, and doing good to all: the being exerciſed in which things doth indeed render a man highly conſiderable, and his life excellently valuable.

'Tis an employment moſt proper to us as reaſonable men. For what more proper entertainments can our mind have, than to be purifying and beautifying itſelf, to be keeping itſelf and its ſubordinate faculties in order, to be attending upon the management of thoughts, of paſſions, of words, of actions depending upon its governance?

'Tis an employment moſt beneficial to us: in purſuing which we greatly better ourſelves, and improve our condition; we benefit and oblige others; we procure ſound reputation and ſteady friendſhips; we decline many irkſome miſchiefs and annoyances; we *do* not (like thoſe in the Prophet) *ſpend our labour for that which ſatisfieth not, nor ſpend our money for that* Iſa. lv. 2.

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which is not bread: for both temporal proſperity and eternal felicity are the wages of the labour which we take herein.

'Tis an employment moſt conſtant, never allowing ſloth or liſtleſſneſs to creep in, inceſſantly buſying all our faculties with earneſt contention; according to that profeſſion of St. Paul, declaring the nature thereof, *Herein always do I exerciſe myſelf, to have a conſcience void of offence toward God and toward man.* Whence it is called a *fight*, and a *race*, implying the continual earneſtneſs of attention and activity, which is to be ſpent thereon. Acts xxiv. 16.

It is withal a ſweet and grateful buſineſs: for it is a pious man's character, that *he delighteth greatly in God's commandments*; that *the commandments are not grievous to him*; that it is *his meat and drink to do God's will*; that *God's words* (or precepts) *are ſweeter than honey to his taſte*; that *the ways of* religious *wiſdom are ways of pleaſantneſs, and all her paths are peace.* Whereas all other employments are weariſome, and ſoon become loathſome: this, the farther we proceed in it, the more pleaſant and ſatisfactory it groweth [i]. There is perpetual matter of victory over bad inclinations peſtering us within, and ſtrong temptations aſſailing us without: which to combat hath much delight; to maſter, breedeth inexpreſſible content. The ſenſe alſo of God's love, the influences of his grace and comfort communicated in the performances of devotion and all duty, the ſatisfaction of good conſcience, the aſſured hope of reward, the foretaſtes of future bliſs, do ſeaſon and ſweeten all the labours taken, and all the difficulties undergone therein. Pſal. cxii. 1. 1 John v. 3. John iv. 34. Pſal. cxix. 103. Prov. iii. 17.

In fine, the bare light of nature hath diſcerned, that were it not for ſuch matters as theſe to ſpend a man's care and pains upon, this would be a lament-

[i] Non poteſt cuiquam ſemper idem placere, niſi rectum. *Sen.* 20. Dedit hoc providentia hominibus munus, ut honeſta magis juvarent. *Quint.* i. 12.

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able world to live in. There was, for inſtance, an Emperor, great and mighty as ever did wield ſceptre upon earth, whoſe excellent virtue, coupled with wiſdom, (inferior, perhaps, to none that any man ever without ſpecial inſpiration hath been endowed with) did qualify him with moſt advantage to examine and rightly to judge of things here; who, notwithſtanding all the conveniences which his royal eſtate and well ſettled proſperity might afford, (the which ſurely he had fully taſted and tried) did yet thus expreſs his thoughts; Τί μοι ζῆν ἐν κόσμῳ κενῷ θεῶν, ἢ προνοίας κενῷ; *What doth it concern me to live in a world void of God, or void of Providence?* To govern the greateſt empire that ever was, in the deepeſt calm; to enjoy the largeſt affluences of wealth, of ſplendor, of reſpect, of pleaſure; to be loved, to be dreaded, to be ſerved, to be adored by ſo many nations; to have the whole civil world obſequious to his will and nod; all theſe things ſeemed vain and idle, not worthy of a man's regard, affection, or choice, in caſe there were no God to worſhip, no providence to obſerve, no piety to be exerciſed. So little worth the while common ſenſe hath adjudged it to live without religion.

M. Ant. ii. 11. vi. 10.

Nullius bonum ſine ſocio jucunda poſſeſſio eſt. *Sen. Ep.* 6.

V. It is a conſiderable benefit of piety, that it affordeth the beſt friendſhips and ſweeteſt ſociety. Man is framed for ſociety, and cannot live well without it: many of his faculties would be uſeleſs, many of his appetites would reſt unſatisfied in ſolitude. To have a friend wiſe and able, honeſt and good, unto whom upon all occaſions we may have recourſe for advice, for aſſiſtance, for conſolation, is a great convenience of life: and this benefit we owe to religion, which ſupplieth us with various friendſhips of the beſt kind, moſt beneficial and moſt ſweet unto us.

Ut aliarum rerum nobis innata dulcedo eſt, ſic amicitiæ. *Sen. Ep.* 9.

It maketh God our friend, a friend infinitely better than all friends, moſt affectionate and kind, moſt faithful and ſure, moſt able, moſt willing, and ever moſt ready to perform all friendly offices, to yield advice in all our doubts, ſuccour in all our needs, comfort

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ſort in all our troubles, ſatisfaction to all our deſires. SERM.
Unto him it miniſtereth a free addreſs upon all occa- XI.
ſions; with him it alloweth us continually a moſt ——
ſweet and pleaſant intercourſe. The pious man hath Prov. xii. 2. Pſal. xxxiv. 15. xxxiii. 18. cxlv. 19. xxxvii. 28.
always the all-wiſe God to counſel him, to guide his
actions and order his ſteps; he hath the Almighty
to protect, ſupport, and relieve him; he hath the im-
menſe goodneſs to commiſerate and comfort him; Job xxxvi. 7.
unto him he is not only encouraged, but obliged, to
reſort in need: upon him he may, he ought to diſ-
charge all his cares and burthens.

It conſequently doth engage all creatures in the world to be our friends, or inſtruments of good to us, according to their ſeveral capacities, by the direction and diſpoſal of God. All the ſervants of our great Friend will, in compliance to him, be ſerviceable to us, *Thou ſhalt be in league with the ſtones of the field,* Job v. 23. *and the beaſts of the field ſhall be at peace with thee:* ſo Job's friend promiſeth him upon condition of piety. And God himſelf confirmeth that promiſe; *In that* Hoſ. ii. 18. *day,* ſaith he in the prophet, *will I make a covenant for them with the beaſts of the field, and with the fowls of heaven, and with the creeping things of the ground.* And again, *When thou paſſeſt through the waters, I will be* Iſa. xliii. 2. *with thee; and through the rivers, they ſhall not overflow thee: when thou walkeſt through the fire, thou ſhalt not be burnt; neither ſhall the flame kindle upon thee.* And, *The ſun ſhall not ſmite thee by day, nor the moon* Pſ. cxxi. 6. *by night. Thou ſhalt tread upon the lion and adder, the* Pſal. xci. 13. *young lion and the dragon ſhalt thou trample under foot. They ſhall take up ſcorpions; and if they drink any deadly* Mark xvi. 18. *thing, it ſhall not hurt them:* (ſo our Lord promiſed Deut. xxviii. 12. to his Diſciples.) Not only the heavens ſhall diſpenſe their kindly influences, and the earth yield her plentiful ſtores, and all the elements diſcharge their natural and ordinary good offices; nor only the tame and ſociable creatures ſhall upon this condition faithfully ſerve us; but even the moſt wild, moſt fierce, moſt ravenous, moſt venomous creatures

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SERM. XI. ſhall, if there be need, prove friendly and helpful, or at leaſt harmleſs to us: as were the ravens to Elias, the lions to Daniel, the viper to St. Paul, the fire to the *three children.*

1 Kings xvii. 6.

But eſpecially piety doth procure the friendſhip of the good Angels, that puiſſant hoſt of glorious and happy ſpirits: they all do tenderly love the pious perſon; they are ever ready to ſerve and do him good, to protect him from danger, to aid him in his undertakings, to reſcue him from miſchiefs. What an honour, what a bleſſing is this, to have ſuch an innumerable company of noble friends (the courtiers and favourites of heaven) deeply concerned and conſtantly vigilant for our welfare!

Pſal. xxxiv. 7. xci. 11. Heb. i. 14.

It alſo engageth the bleſſed ſaints in glory, *the ſpirits of juſt men perfected, the church of the firſt-born,* to bear deareſt affection to us, to further our proſperity with their good wiſhes and earneſt prayers, mightily prevalent with God.

It rendereth all ſorts of men our friends. To good men it uniteth us in holy communion; the communion of brotherly charity and hearty good will, attended with all the good offices they are able to perform: to other men it reconcileth and endeareth us; for that innocent and inoffenſive, courteous and benign, charitable and beneficent demeanour, (ſuch as piety doth require and produce) are apt to conciliate reſpect and affection from the worſt men. For, *Vincit malos pertinax bonitas*; men hardly can perſiſt enemies to him whom they perceive to be their friend: and ſuch the pious man in diſpoſition of mind, and in effect when occaſion ſerveth, is toward all men [k]; being ſenſible of his obligation to love all men, and, *as he hath opportunity, to do good to all men.* It aſſureth and more ſtrictly endeareth our friends to us. For, as it maketh us hearty, faithful, conſtant

Sen. de Benef. vii. 21.

Gal. vi. 10. ὁ ἀγαθὸς ἰδίας ἀλλ' ἁπάντας. *Arist. Eth.* viii. 4.

[k] Qui ſibi amicus eſt, ſcito hunc amicum omnibus eſſe. *Sen. Ep.* 6.

friends

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friends to others; ſo it reciprocally tieth others to us in the like ſincerity and faſtneſs of good will. SERM. XI.

It reconcileth enemies. For, *when a man's ways do pleaſe the Lord, he maketh his enemies to be at peace with him.* Prov. xvi. 7. It hath a natural efficacy to that purpoſe, and Divine bleſſing promoteth it.

By it all converſation becometh tolerable, grateful, and uſeful. For a pious man is not eaſily diſturbed with any croſſneſs or perverſeneſs, any infirmity or impertinency of thoſe he converſeth with: he can bear the weakneſſes and the failings of his company; he can by wholeſome reflections upon all occurrences advantage and pleaſe himſelf [1].

In fine, piety rendereth a man a true friend and a good companion to himſelf; ſatisfied in himſelf, able to converſe freely and pleaſantly with his own thoughts. It is for the want of pious inclinations and diſpoſitions, that ſolitude (a thing which ſometimes cannot be avoided, which often ſhould be embraced) is to moſt men ſo irkſome and tedious, that men do carefully ſhun themſelves, and fly from their own thoughts; that they decline all converſe with their own ſouls, and hardly dare look upon their own hearts and conſciences: whence they become aliens from home, wholly unacquainted with themſelves, moſt ignorant of their own neareſt concernments, no faithful friends or pleaſant companions to themſelves; ſo for refuge and eaſe they unſeaſonably run into idle or lewd converſation, where they diſorder and defile themſelves [m]. But the

Quæris quid profecerim? amicus eſſe mihi cœpi. *Sen. Ep.* 6.

[1] Συνδιάγειν τι ἕτος ἑαυτῷ βέλεται· ἡδέως γὰρ αὐτὸ ποιεῖ.—(*Ariſtot. Eth.* ix. 4.) τῶν τε γὰρ πεπραγμένων ἐπιτερπεῖς αἱ μνῆμαι, καὶ τῶν μελλόντων ἐλπίδες ἀγαθαί.

[m] Nemo eſt, cui non ſatius ſit cum quolibet eſſe, quam ſecum. *Sen. Ep.* 25.

Ἔνιοι τὸν ἴδιον βίον, ὡς ἀτερπέστατον θέαμα, προσιδεῖν ὐχ ὑπομένουσιν, &c. *Plut.* περὶ Πολυπρ. p. 916.

Ζητοῦσιν οἱ μοχθηροὶ μεθ' ὧν συνημερεύσουσιν, ἑαυτοὺς δ' φεύγουσιν. *Ariſt.* ix. 4.

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pious man is (like Scipio) *never leſs alone, than when alone:* his ſolitude and retirement is not only tolerable, but commonly the moſt grateful and fruitful part of his life: he can ever with much pleaſure, and more advantage, converſe with himſelf; digeſting and marſhalling his thoughts, his affections, his purpoſes into good order, ſearching and diſcuſſing his heart, reflecting on his paſt ways, enforcing his former good reſolutions, and framing new ones; enquiring after edifying truths; ſtretching his meditations toward the beſt and ſublimeſt objects, raiſing his hopes and warming his affections toward ſpiritual and heavenly things; aſking himſelf pertinent queſtions, and reſolving incident doubts concerning his practice: in fine, converſing with his beſt friend in devotion; with admiration and love contemplating the divine perfections diſplayed in the works of nature, of providence, of grace; praiſing God for his excellent benefits and mercies; confeſſing his defects and offences; deprecating wrath and imploring pardon, with grace and ability to amend; praying for the ſupply of all his wants [n]. All which performances yield both inconceivable benefit and inexpreſſible comfort. So that ſolitude (that which is to common nature ſo offenſive, to corrupt nature ſo abominable) is to the pious man extremely commodious and comfortable: which is a great advantage peculiar to piety, and the laſt which I ſhall mention.

Nunquam minus ſolus, quam cum ſolus.

So many, and many more than I can expreſs, vaſtly great and precious advantages do accrue from piety; ſo that well may we conclude with St. Paul, that *Godlineſs is profitable for all things.*

[n] Acquieſcit ſibi, cogitationibus ſuis traditus. *Sen. Ep.* 9.
Sapiens nunquam ſolus eſſe poteſt, habet ſecum omnes qui ſunt, quique unquam fuerunt boni; et animum liberum quocunque vult transfert: quod corpore non poteſt, cogitatione complectitur; et ſi hominum inops fuerit, loquitur cum Deo. Nunquam minus ſolus erit, quam cum ſolus fuerit. *Hier. adv. Jovin.* i. 28.

It

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It remaineth that, if we be wiſe, we ſhould, if we yet have it not ingraffed in us, labour to acquire it; if we have it, that we ſhould endeavour to improve it, by conſtant exerciſe, to the praiſe of God, the good of our neighbour, and our own comfort. Which that we may effectually perform, Almighty God in mercy vouchſafe, by his grace, through Jeſus Chriſt our Lord; to whom for ever be all glory and praiſe. *Amen.*

SERMON

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SERMON XII.

The Reward of honouring God,

1 SAM. ii. 30.

For them that honour me I will honour,

THE words are in the ſtricteſt ſenſe the word of God, uttered immediately by God himſelf; and may thence command from us an eſpecial attention and regard. The hiſtory of that which occaſioned them is, I preſume, well known; neither ſhall I make any deſcant or reflection thereon; but do take the words ſeparately, as a propoſition of itſelf, affording a complete inſtruction and ample matter of diſcourſe. And as ſuch, they plainly imply two things: a duty required of us to *honour God*; and a reward proffered to us, upon performance of that duty, being *honoured by God*. It is natural for us, before we are willing to undertake any work, to conſider the reward or benefit accruing from it; and it is neceſſary, before we can perform any duty, to underſtand the nature thereof. To this our method of action I ſhall

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SERM. XII. shall suit the method of my discourse; first endeavouring to estimate the reward, then to explain the duty. Afterward I mean to shew briefly why in reason the duty is enjoined; how in effect the reward is conferred.

I. The reward may be considered either absolutely, (as what it is in itself,) or relatively, (as to its rise, and whence it comes.)

1. For itself, it is honour; a thing, if valued according to the rate it bears in the common market, of highest price among all the objects of human desire; the chief reward which the greatest actions and which the best actions do pretend unto, or are capable of; that which usually bears most sway in the hearts, and hath strongest influence upon the lives of men; the desire of obtaining and maintaining which doth commonly overbear other most potent inclinations. The love of pleasure stoops thereto: for men, to get or keep reputation, will decline the most pleasant enjoyments, will embrace the hardest pains. Yea, it often prevails over the love of life itself, which men do not only frequently expose to danger, but sometimes devote to certain loss, for its sake. If we observe what is done in the world, we may discern it to be the source of most undertakings therein; that it not only moveth the wheels of public action, (that not only for it great princes contend, great armies march, great battles are fought;) but that from it most private business derives its life and vigour: that for honour especially the soldier undergoes hardship, toil, and hazard; the scholar plods and beats his brains; the merchant runs about so busily, and adventures so far; yea, that for its sake the meanest labourer and artificer doth spend his sweat, and stretch his sinews. The principal drift of all this care and industry (the great reason of all this scuffling for power, this searching for knowledge, this scraping and scrambling for wealth,) doth seem to be, that men

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men would live in ſome credit, would raiſe themſelves above contempt [o]. SERM. XII.

In ſuch requeſt, of ſuch force, doth honour appear to be. If we examine why, we may find more than mere faſhion (or mutual imitation and conſent) to ground the experiment upon. There is one obvious reaſon why no mean regard ſhould be had thereto; its great convenience and uſefulneſs; for that a man cannot himſelf live ſafely, quietly, or pleaſantly, without ſome competent meaſure thereof; cannot well ſerve the public, perform offices of duty to his relations, of kindneſs to his friends, of charity to his neighbours, but under its protection, and with its aid: it being an engine very requiſite for the managing any buſineſs, for the compaſſing any deſign, at leaſt ſweetly and ſmoothly; it procuring to us many furtherances in our proceedings, removing divers obſtacles out of our way, guarding a man's perſon from offences, adding weight to his words, putting an edge upon his endeavours: for every one allows a favourable ear to his diſcourſe, lends an aſſiſting hand to his attempts, grants a ready credence to his teſtimony, and makes a fair conſtruction of his doings, whom he eſteems and reſpects. So is honour plainly valuable among the *bona utilia*, as no ſmall

[o] Ἴδοις δ' ἂν καὶ τῶν ἰδιωτῶν τοὺς ἐπιεικεστάτους, ὑπὲρ ἄλλου μὲ ὑδοὺς ἂν τὸ ζῆν ἀπεκαταλλαξαμένους· ὑπὲρ δὲ τοῦ τυχεῖν καλῆς δόξης, ἀποθνήσκειν ἑλέσθαι. *Iſocr. Orat. ad Philip.*

Mors tum æquiſſimo animo appetitur, cum ſuis ſe laudibus vita occidens conſolari poteſt. *Cic.* 1. *Tuſc.*

—Laudis avidi pecuniæ liberales erant, gloriam ingentem divitias honeſtas volebant; hanc ardentiſſime dilexerunt, propter hanc vivere voluerunt, pro hac et mori non dubitaverunt. Cæteras cupiditates hujus unius ingenti cupiditate preſſerunt. *Aug. de Civ. Dei*, v. 12.

Αἱ γὰρ δυναστεῖαι καὶ ὁ πλοῦτος διὰ τὴν τιμὴν ἐκτὸς αἱρεταί. *Ariſt. Eth.* iv. 3.

Honos alit artes, omnesque incenduntur ad ſtudia gloria, &c. *Cic. Tuſc. Quæſt.* 1.

accommo-

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SERM. XII. accommodation of life; and as such, reason approves it to our judgment [p].

But searching farther, we shall find the appetite of honour to have a deeper ground, and that it is rooted even in our nature itself. For we may descry it budding forth in men's first infancy (before the use of reason, or speech;) even little children being ambitious to be made much of, maintaining among themselves petty emulations and competitions, as it were about punctilios of honour. We may observe it growing with age, waxing bigger and stronger together with the increase of wit and knowledge, of civil culture and experience; that the maturest age doth most resent and relish it; that it prevails most in civilized nations; that men of the best parts, of the highest improvements, of the weightiest employments, do most zealously affect it and stand upon it; that they who most struggle with it do most feel its might, how difficult it is to resist or restrain it, how impossible it is to stifle or extinguish it. For the philosopher with all his reasons and considerations cannot dispute it down, or persuade it away; the anchoret cannot with all his austerities starve it, or by his retirement shun it: no affliction, no poverty, no wretchedness of condition can totally suppress it. It is a spirit, that not only haunts our courts and palaces, but frequents our schools and cloisters, yea, creeps into cottages, into hospitals, into prisons, and even dogs men into deserts and solitudes; so close it sticks to our nature. Plato says, it is the last coat which a wise man doth put off. But I question whether he could shew us that wise man who had done it, or could

Vidi ego et expertus sum zelantem parvulum, &c. *Aug.*

In solitudine sitis subrepit superbia. *Hier.*

[p] Vide *Hier. Ep. ad Celant.*

Conscientia nobis necessaria est, fama proxima. Qui conscientia fidens, famam negligit, crudelis est. *Aug.*

Πρὸς χρείας ἐπιτήδειον ἔγγιστα ἡ δόξα. *Galen.*

Nec vero negligenda fama est; nec mediocre telum ad res gerendas existimare oportet benevolentiam civium. *Cic. de Amic.*

Vide *Chrys.* tom. vi. *Orat.* 17.

tell

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tell us where he dwelt, except perhaps in his own Utopian republic. For they who moſt pretend to have done it (who in their diſcourſe moſt vilify honour; who talk like Chryſippus, that a wiſe man for reputation ſake will not ſo much as ſtretch out his finger; or like Seneca, that we ſhould do every thing purely for conſcience ſake, without any regard to men's opinion; who make harangues and write volumes againſt glory [q]) do yet appear by their practice, ſometimes, by ſo doing, to aim at it: even as men do uſually complain of and eagerly quarrel with that which they moſt affect and woo. Chryſippus wrote, as we are told, above 700 books, moſt of them concerning logical quirks, and ſuch as one can hardly imagine what other drift he could have in compoſing them, beſides oſtentation of his ſubtilty and ſharpneſs of wit. Seneca, if hiſtory do not wrong him, and the face of his actions do not miſrepreſent him, was not in his heart exempt from a ſpice of ambition. Yea, that excellent emperor M. Aurelius, who would often ſpeak like a Stoick, could not but commonly act like a man, more by his practice commending honour, than he diſparaged it in his words. For ſtory repreſents him very careful and jealous of his credit, very diligent to preſerve it and to repair it [r]. Tertullian calls ſuch philoſophers *negotiatores famæ*, merchants for fame: and it is perchance ſome part of their cunning in that trade, which makes them ſtrive to beat down the price of this commodity, that they may more eaſily engroſs it to themſelves. However, experience proves that ſuch words are but words, (words ſpoken out of affectation and pretence, rather than

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Cic. de Fin. 3.

Laert.

Tert. Apol.

[q] Nihil opinionis cauſa, omnia conſcientiæ faciam. *Sen. de V. B.*
Nil ſit illi cum ambitione famaque commune, ſibi placeat. *Epiſt.* 113.
Juſtum eſſe gratis oportet. *Ib.*
Id. de Ira, iii. 41.

[r] Erat famæ ſuæ curioſiſſimus, et male loquentium dictis vel literis vel ſermone reſpondebat. *Capit.*

in

SERM. XII. in good earneſt and according to truth;) that endeavours to baniſh or to extirpate this deſire are but fond and fruitleſs attempts. The reaſon why is clear: for it is as if one ſhould diſpute againſt eating and drinking, or ſhould labour to free himſelf from hunger and thirſt: the appetite of honour being indeed, as that of food, innate unto us, ſo as not to be quenched or ſmothered, except by ſome violent diſtemper or indiſpoſition of mind [a]; even by the wiſe Author of our nature originally implanted therein, for very good ends and uſes, reſpecting both the private and public benefit of men; as an engagement to virtue, and a reſtraint from vice; as an excitement of induſtry, an incentive of courage, a ſupport of conſtancy in the proſecution of worthy enterpriſes; as a ſerviceable inſtrument for the conſtitution, conſervation, and improvement of human ſociety. For did not ſome love of honour glow in men's breaſts, were that noble ſpark quite extinct, few men probably would ſtudy for honourable qualities, or perform laudable deeds; there would be nothing to keep ſome men within bounds of modeſty and decency, to deter them from doing odious and ugly things; men, not caring what others thought of them, would not regard what they did themſelves; a barbarous ſloth, or brutiſh ſtupidity, would overſpread the world, withdrawing from common life moſt of its ornaments, much of its convenience; men generally would, if not altogether ſhun ſociety, yet at leaſt decline the cares and burthens requiſite to the promoting its welfare, for the ſuſtaining which uſually the chief encouragement, the main recompence, is this of honour. That men therefore have ſo tender and delicate a ſenſe of their reputation, (ſo that touching it is like pricking a nerve, as ſoon

Αἰδὼς δ' οἱ-
χέσθων πάν-
των γενέτειρα
καὶ τροφὸς.
Naz. Carm. 56.

[a] Ut quidam morbo aliquo et ſenſûs ſtupore ſuavitatem cibi non ſentiunt; ſic libidinoſi, avari, facinoroſi veræ laudis guſtum non habent. *Cic. Philipp.* 2.

felt,

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felt, and as ſmartly offenſive,) is an excellent proviſion in nature; in regard whereto honour may paſs among the *bona naturalia*, as a good neceſſary for the ſatisfaction of nature, and for ſecuring the accompliſhment of its beſt deſigns.

A moderate regard to honour is alſo commendable as an inſtance of humanity or good-will to men, yea, as an argument of humility, or a ſober conceit of ourſelves. For to deſire another man's eſteem, and conſequently his love, (which in ſome kind or degree is an inſeparable companion of eſteem) doth imply ſomewhat of reciprocal eſteem and affection toward him; and to prize the judgment of other men concerning us doth ſignify, that we are not overſatisfied with our own.

Negligere quid de ſe quiſque ſentiat arrogantis eſt et diſſoluti. *Cic. de Offic.* i.

We might for its further commendation allege the authority of the more cool and candid ſort of philoſophers, (ſuch as grounded their judgment of things upon notions agreeable to common ſenſe and experience; who adapted their rules of practice to the nature of man, ſuch as they found in the world, not ſuch as they framed in their own fancies,) who have ranked honour among the principal of things deſirable, and adorned it with faireſt elogies; terming it a divine thing, the beſt of exterior goods, the moſt honeſt fruit and moſt ample reward of true virtue; adjudging, that to neglect the opinions of men (eſpecially of perſons worthy and laudable) is a ſign of ſtupid baſeneſs, that to contemn them is an effect of unreaſonable haughtineſs; repreſenting the love of honour (rightly grounded and duly moderated) not only as the parent and guardian (as productive and preſervative) of other virtues, but as a virtue itſelf, of no ſmall magnitude and luſtre in the conſtellation of virtues, the virtue of generoſity[t].

A vir-

[t] Θεῖόν τι ἡ τιμή. *Plat. de Leg.* iv.
Καλὸν ταῖς πολλαῖς πόλεσι τὸ φαρμακίλευσμά ἐστι, πρωτιμᾶν εὐδοξίαν πρὸ τῶν πολλῶν. *Idem de Rep.* xii.

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SERM. XII. A virtue, which next to the ſpirit of true religion, (next to a hearty reverence toward the ſupreme bleſſed Goodneſs, and that holy charity toward men, which ſpringeth thence,) doth lift a man up neareſt to heaven; doth raiſe his mind above the ſordid deſires, the ſorry cares, the fond humours, the perverſe and froward paſſions, with which men commonly are poſſeſſed and acted: that virtue, which enflames a man with courage, ſo that he dares perform what reaſon and duty require of him, that he diſdains to do what is bad or baſe; which inſpires him with ſincerity, that he values his honeſty before all other intereſts and reſpects, that he abhors to wrong or deceive, to flatter or abuſe any man, that he cannot endure to ſeem otherwiſe than he is, to ſpeak otherwiſe than he means, to act otherwiſe than he promiſes and profeſſes; which endows him with courteſy, that he is ready to yield every man his due reſpect, to afford any man what help and ſuccour he is able; that virtue, which renders a man upright in all his dealings, and correſpondent to all his obligations; a loyal ſubject to his prince, and a true lover of his country, a candid judge of perſons and things, an earneſt favourer of whatever is good and commendable, a faithful and hearty friend, a beneficial and uſeful neighbour, a grateful reſenter and requiter of courteſies, hoſpitable to the ſtranger, bountiful to the poor, kind and good to all the world: that virtue, in fine, which conſtitutes a man of honour, who ſurely is the beſt man next to a man of conſcience. Thus may honour be valued from natural light, and according to common ſenſe [u].

But

Μίγιστον τῶν ἐκτὸς ἀγαθῶν ἡ τιμή. *Ariſt. Eth.* iv. 3.

Levis eſt animi, juſtam gloriam, qui eſt fructus virtutis honeſtiſſimus, repudiare. *Cic. in Piſ.*

Ex omnibus præmiis virtutis ampliſſimum eſt præmium gloriæ. *Idem pro Mil.*

[u] Trahimur omnes laudis ſtudio, et optimus quiſque maxime gloria ducitur. *Cic. pro Arch.*

oi

But beyond all this, the holy Scripture (that moſt certain ſtandard, by which we may examine and determine the true worth of things) doth not teach us to ſlight honour, but rather in its fit order and juſt meaſure to love and prize it. It indeed inſtructs us to ground it well; (not upon bad qualities or wicked deeds, that is villainous madneſs; not upon things of a mean and indifferent nature, that is vanity; not upon counterfeit ſhews and pretences, that is hypocriſy; but upon real worth and goodneſs, that may conſiſt with modeſty and ſobriety:) it enjoins us not to be immoderate in our deſires thereof, or complacences therein, not to be irregular in the purſuit or acquiſt of it; (to be ſo is pride and ambition;) but to affect it calmly, to purchaſe it fairly: it directs us not to make a regard thereto our chief principle, not to propound it as our main end of action: it charges us to bear contentedly the want or loſs thereof, (as of other temporal goods;) yea, in ſome caſes, for conſcience ſake, or for God's ſervice, (that is, for a good incomparably better than it,) it obliges us willingly to proſtitute and ſacrifice it, chooſing rather to be infamous than impious, (to be in diſgrace with men, rather than in disfavour with God [x]:) it, in fine, commands us to ſeek and embrace it only in ſubordination, and with final reference to God's honour. Which diſtinctions and cautions being provided, honour is repreſented in holy Scripture as a thing conſiderably good, which may be regarded without blame, which ſometimes in duty muſt be regarded. It is there preferred before other good things, in themſelves not deſpicable. For, *A good name is better than precious ointment*; yea, *A good name is rather to be choſen than great riches*, Eccleſ. vii. 1. Prov. xxii. 1.

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Οἱ χαρίεντες καὶ πρακτικοὶ, plauſible and active men do, ſaith Ariſtotle, place happineſs in honour. *Eth.* i. 4.

[x] Non vis eſſe juſtus ſine gloria? at mehercule ſæpe juſtus eſſe debes cum infamia. *Sen. Epiſt.* cxiii.

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SERM. XII. ——— Eccles. vi. 2. Prov. xxii. 4. Psal. xxi. 5. Prov. iii. 16. Prov. iv. 8, 9. 1 Pet. ii. 17. 1 Tim. v. 3. 17. Phil. ii. 29. 1 Pet. ii. 17. Aristot. Eth. iv. 3. Rom. xiii. 13. Rom. xii. 17. 1 Pet. ii. 12. Phil. iv. 8.

saith the Wise Man. It is called a gift of God: for, *There is a man*, saith the Preacher, *to whom God hath given riches and honour*. Yea, not only a simple gift, but a blessing, conferred in kindness, as a reward and encouragement of goodness: for, *By humility and the fear of the Lord*, saith he again, *are riches and honour*. Whence it is to be acknowledged as an especial benefit, and a fit ground of thanksgiving; as is practised by the Psalmist in his royal hymn: *Honour*, saith he, *and majesty hast thou laid upon him*. Wisdom also is described unto us bearing *in her left hand riches and honour*: and Wisdom surely will not take into any hand of hers, or hold therein, what is worth nothing. No: we are therefore moved to procure her, because *exalting her, she shall promote us.——She shall give unto our head an ornament of grace, a crown of glory shall she deliver to us*. We are also enjoined to render honour as the best expression of good-will and gratitude toward them who best deserve in themselves, or most deserve of us; to our prince, to our parents, to our priests, especially to such of them *as govern and teach well*, to all good men; (*Have such in reputation*, says the Apostle.) And were not honour a good thing, such injunctions would be unreasonable. Yea, because we are obliged to bear good will toward all men, St. Peter bids us to *honour all men*. From hence also, that we are especially bound to render honour unto God himself, we may well infer with Aristotle, that *honour is the best thing in our power to offer*. To these considerations may be added, that we are commanded to walk εὐσχημόνως (*decently*, or speciously, which implies a regard to men's opinion); to *provide things honest in the sight of all men* (τὰ καλὰ, that is, not only things good in substance, but goodly in appearance); to *have our conversation honest before the Gentiles* (καλὴν, again, that is, fair, or comely, and plausible, such as may commend us and our profession to the judgment of them who observe us). St. Paul also exhorts us to *mind*, not only *what things*

are

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are true, are juſt, are pure, but alſo ὅσα σεμνὰ (*what-* SERM.
ever things are venerable, or apt to beget reſpect), ὅσα XII.
προσφιλῆ (*whatever things are lovely,* or gracious in
men's eyes and eſteem), ὅσα εὔφημα (*whatever things are well reported,* or *well reputed of*). He requires us not only *if there be any virtue* (any thing very good in itſelf), but, *if there be any praiſe* (any thing much approved in common eſteem), that we ſhould *mind ſuch things.* Laſtly, the bleſſed ſtate hereafter (the higheſt inſtance of divine bounty, the complete reward of goodneſs) is repreſented and recommended to us as a ſtate of honour and glory, to be ambitious whereof is the character of a good man. *To every man,* ſaith Rom. ii. 6, St. Paul, *ſhall God render according to his works: to* 7. *them, who by patient continuance in well doing, ſeek for glory, and honour, and immortality, eternal life.*

Such is the reward propounded to us in itſelf; no vile or contemptible thing, but, upon various accounts, much valuable; that which the common apprehenſions of men, plain dictates of reaſon, a predominant inſtinct of nature, the judgments of very wiſe men, and divine atteſtation itſelf conſpire to commend unto us as very conſiderable and precious. Such a reward our text preſcribes us the certain, the only way of attaining.

2. Such a benefit is here tendered to us (that which yet more highly commends it, and exceedingly enhances its worth) by God himſelf: *I,* ſaith he, *will honour.* It is ſanctified by coming from his holy hand; it is dignified by following his moſt wiſe and juſt diſpoſal; it is fortified and aſſured by depending on his unqueſtionable word, and uncontrollable power: who, as he is the prime Author of all good, ſo he is in eſpecial manner the ſovereign diſpenſer of honour. *The king,* we ſay, *is the fountain of honour.* What any king, as the repreſentative and delegate of God, is in his particular kingdom, that is Almighty God abſolutely and independently in all the world. *Both riches and honour,* ſaid good king 1 Chron. David, xxix. 12.

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SERM. XII. David, *come of thee, for thou ruleſt over all: in thine hand is power and might; in thine hand it is to make great, and to give ſtrength unto all.* He whoſe grants are in effect only ſure and valid, whoſe favours only do in the end turn to good account, he freely offers us moſt deſirable preferment: he doth himſelf graciouſly hold forth moſt authentic patents, by virtue of which we may all become *right honourable*, and *perſons of quality* indeed; having not only the names and titles, the outward enſigns and badges of dignity (ſuch as earthly princes confer), but the ſubſtantial reality, the aſſured enjoyment thereof. (For man can only impoſe law upon tongues and geſtures; God alone commandeth and inclineth hearts, wherein honour chiefly reſideth.) He offers it, I ſay, moſt freely indeed, yet not abſolutely: he doth not go to ſell it for a price, yet he propounds it under a condition, as a moſt juſt and equal, ſo a very gentle and eaſy condition. It is but an exchange of honour for honour; of honour from God, which is a free gift, for honour from us, which is a juſt duty; of honour from him our ſovereign Lord, for honour from us his poor vaſſals; of honour from the moſt high Majeſty of heaven, for honour from us vile worms, creeping upon the earth. Such an overture one would think it not only reaſonable to accept, but impoſſible to refuſe. For can any man dare not to honour invincible power, infallible wiſdom, inflexible juſtice? Will any man forbear to honour immenſe goodneſs and bounty? Yes, it ſeems there are men ſo mad, as to reject ſo fair an offer; ſo bad, as to neglect ſo equal a duty. Let us therefore conſider, what it is that is here required of us, or wherein this honouring of God conſiſts, that we may thereby diſcern when we perform this duty, when we are deficient therein.

II. There are ſeveral ways of honouring God, or ſeveral parts and degrees of this duty; all which we may refer to two ſorts, conceiving the duty as a compound,

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pound, made up of two main ingredients (corre- SERM.
ſpondent to thoſe two parts in which they reſide, XII.
and of which our nature conſiſts; which diſtinction——
St. Paul ſuggeſteth, when he ſaith, *Glorify God in your* 1 Cor. vi.
body, and in your ſpirit, which are God's), one of them 20.
being, as it were, the form and ſoul, the other as the matter and body of the duty.

1. The ſoul of that honour which is required of us toward God, is that internal eſteem and reverence, which we ſhould bear in our hearts towards him; importing that we have impreſſed upon our minds ſuch conceptions about him as are worthy of him, ſuitable to the perfection of his nature, to the eminency of his ſtate, to the juſt quality of his works and actions; that we apprehend him to be, what he really is, in his nature, ſuperlatively good, wiſe, powerful, holy, and juſt; that we aſcribe unto him the production and conſervation of all beings, together with an entire ſuperintendency over, and abſolute diſpoſal of, all events; that we conceive ourſelves obliged to ſubmit unto, and acquieſce in, all his diſpenſations of providence, as moſt wiſe and moſt righteous; to rely upon the declarations of his mind (whether in way of aſſertion or promiſe), as infallibly true and certain. In ſuch acts of mind the honouring of God doth primarily conſiſt. In acts, I ſay; not in ſpeculative opinions concerning the divine excellencies (ſuch as all men have, who are not downright atheiſts or infidels), floating in the fancy, or dormant in the mind; but in continually preſent, lively, effectual acts of apprehenſion and judgment, ſinking down into the heart and affections, and quickening them to a congruous, real performance. Such an apprehenſion of God's power, as ſhall make us to dread his irreſiſtible hand, ſhall cauſe us to deſpair of proſpering in bad courſes, ſhall diſpoſe us to confide in him, as able to perform whatever he wills us to expect from him: ſuch an opinion of his wiſdom, as ſhall keep us from queſtioning whether that is beſt

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SERM. XII. which God declares to be ſo; as ſhall hinder us from preſuming (in compliance with our own ſhallow reaſon, or vain fancy) to do any thing againſt God's judgment and advice: ſuch a conceit of God's juſtice, as ſhall render us careful to perform what his law promiſes to reward, and fearful to commit what it threatens to puniſh: ſuch a perſuaſion concerning God's goodneſs, as ſhall kindle in us an hearty affection toward him, ſhall make us very ſenſible of his bounty, and ready to yield returns of duty and gratitude unto him; as ſhall preſerve us from being diſtruſtful of his Providence, or doubtful in our need and diſtreſs of finding relief from him: ſuch a vigorous and fruitful eſteem of God in all reſpects, as ſhall produce in us diſpoſitions of mind, and actions of life, agreeable to our various relations and obligations to him; becoming us as his creatures and children, as his ſubjects and ſervants. This is indeed the ſoul of the duty, which being abſent, all exterior, how ſpecious ſoever, either profeſſions or performances, are but as pictures, having in them ſomewhat of reſemblance in ſhape and colour, nothing of life: yea rather as carcaſes, not only dead and ſenſeleſs, but rotten and filthy in God's ſight. *This people,* ſaith God, *do honour me with their lips, but their heart is far from me.* Such honour is indeed no honour at all, but impudent abuſe and profane mockery: for what can be more abominably vain, than for a man to court and cajole him who knows his whole heart, who ſees that he either minds not, or means not what he ſays? It behoves us therefore by all proper means, by contemplating the works and actions of God, (his admirable works of nature, the wiſe proceedings of his providence, the glorious diſpenſations of his grace) by meditating on his word, by praying for his grace, by obſerving his law and will, to raiſe up in our hearts, to foment and cheriſh this internal reverence, which is the true ſpring of all piety, the principle which forms and actuates that other ſort, coming

Matt. xv. 8.

next

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next to be touched on, being the body of our due honour to God; concurring in its order to the integrity thereof, as without which the interior part would be a kind of ghoſt, too thin in ſubſtance, too remote from ſenſe, too deſtitute of good fruit and uſe. SERM. XII.

2. This bodily part conſiſts in outward expreſſions and performances, whereby we declare our eſteem and reverence of God, and produce or promote the like in others. For our thus honouring God reſpects thoſe two ends and effects, the uttering our own, the exciting in others a reverence toward him. And it we may firſt view in the general, or groſs bulk thereof; then ſurvey its principal members.

Firſt, in general, God is honoured by a willing and careful practice of all piety and virtue for conſcience ſake, or in avowed obedience to his holy will. This is the moſt natural expreſſion of our reverence toward him, and the moſt effectual way of promoting the ſame in others. A ſubject cannot better demonſtrate the reverence he bears toward his prince, than by (with a cheerful diligence) obſerving his laws; for by ſo doing he declares that he acknowledgeth the authority, and revereth the majeſty, which enacted them; that he approves the wiſdom which deviſed them, and the goodneſs which deſigned them for public benefit; that he dreads his prince's power, which can maintain them, and his juſtice, which will vindicate them; that he relies upon his fidelity, in making good what of protection or of recompence he propounds to the obſervers of them. No leſs pregnant a ſignification of our reverence toward God do we yield in our gladly and ſtrictly obeying his laws; thereby evidencing our ſubmiſſion to God's ſovereign authority, our eſteem of his wiſdom and goodneſs, our awful regard to his power and juſtice, our confidence in him, and dependence upon his word. As alſo the practice of wholeſome laws, viſibly producing good fruits (peace and proſperity in the commonwealth), doth conciliate reſpect unto the prince, he thereby

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SERM. XII. thereby appearing wise and good, able to discern, and willing to choose what confers to public benefit: so actions conformable to the divine law, being (by God's wise and gracious disposal) both in themselves comely and lovely, and in effect, as St. Paul saith,

Tit. iii. 8. *good and profitable to men*, conducing indeed not only
Neh. ix. 13. Deut. x. 13. to private, but also to public welfare, to the rendering human society comfortable, to the settling and securing common tranquillity, the performance of them must needs bring great commendation to the author and ordainer of them. By observing them

1 Pet. ii. 9. we shall, as St. Peter speaks, *set forth the virtues of him that called us* to such a practice. The light and lustre of good works, done in regard to divine command, will cause men to see clearly the excellencies of our most wise and gracious Lord; will conse-

Matt. v. 16. quently induce and excite them *to glorify our Father*
Joh. xv. 8. *which is in heaven. In this*, saith our Saviour, *is my Father glorified, if you bear much fruit.* The goodliness to the sight, the pleasantness to the taste, which is ever perceptible in those fruits which genuine piety beareth, the beauty men see in a calm mind and a sober conversation, the sweetness they taste from works of justice and charity, will certainly produce veneration to the doctrine which teacheth such things, and to the authority which enjoins them. It is an

Rom. ii. 23. Tit. ii. 5. 2 Sam. xii. 14. Isa. lii. 5. Ezek. xxxvi. 20. aggravation of impiety, often insisted upon in Scripture, that it slurs, as it were, and defames God, brings reproach and obloquy upon him, causes his name to be profaned, to be cursed, to be blasphemed: and it is answerably a commendation of piety, that by the practice thereof we (not only procure many great advantages to ourselves, many blessings and comforts here, all joys and felicities hereafter; but do also

Eph. iv. 1. Phil. i. 27. Col. i. 10. 1 Thes. ii. 12. Rom. xii. 17. thereby) beget esteem to God himself, and sanctify his ever-blessed name; cause him to be regarded and reverenced, his name to be praised and blessed among men. It is by exemplary piety, by *providing things honest in the sight of all men*, by doing things honourable

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able and laudable (such are all things which Gods hath been pleased to command us), that we shall be sure to fulfil that precept of St. Paul, of *doing all things to the glory of God*; which is the body of that duty we speak of. SERM. XII. 1 Cor. x. 31.

Secondly, But there are, deserving a particular inspection, some members thereof, which in a peculiar and eminent manner do constitute this honour; some acts which more signally conduce to the illustration of God's glory. Such are,

1. The frequent and constant performance (in a serious and reverent manner) of all religious duties, or devotions immediately addressed to God, or conversant about him: that which the Psalmist styles, *Giving the Lord the honour due to his name, worshipping the Lord in the beauty of holiness.* Psal. xxix. 2.

2. Using all things peculiarly related unto God, his holy name, his holy word, his holy places (the places *where his honour dwelleth*), his holy times (religious fasts and festivities), with especial respect. Psal. xxvi. 8. Isa. lviii. 13.

3. Yielding due observance to the deputies and ministers of God (both civil and ecclesiastical) as such, or because of their relation to God: the doing of which God declares that he interprets and accepts as done unto himself. Rom. xiii. 4. Mal. ii. 7. 1 Sam. viii. 7. Matt. x. 40. John xiii. 20.

4. Freely spending what God hath given us (out of respect unto him) in works of piety, charity, and mercy; that which the Wise Man calls, *honouring the Lord with our substance.* 2 Cor. ix. 13. Prov. iii. 9. xiv. 31.

5. All penitential acts, by which we submit unto God, and humble ourselves before him. (As Achan, by confessing of his sin, is said to *give glory to the Lord God of Israel.*) Josh. vii. 19. Apoc. xvi. 9.

6. Cheerful undergoing afflictions, losses, disgraces, for the profession of God's truth, or for obedience to God's commands. (As St. Peter is said *by his death*, suffered upon such accounts, *to glorify God.*) John xxi. 19.

These signal instances of this duty (represented as such in holy Scripture) for brevity's sake I pass over; craving

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SERM. XII. craving leave only to conſider one, moſt pertinent to our preſent buſineſs, and indeed a very comprehenſive one; which is this:

7. We ſhall eſpecially honour God, by diſcharging faithfully thoſe offices which God hath intruſted us with; by improving diligently thoſe talents which God hath committed to us; by uſing carefully thoſe means and opportunities which God hath vouchſafed us, of doing him ſervice, and promoting his glory. Thus he to whom God hath given wealth, if he expend it (not to the nouriſhment of pride and luxury, not only to the gratifying his own pleaſure or humour, but) to the furtherance of God's honour, or to the ſuccour of his indigent neighbour (in any pious or charitable way), he doth thereby in eſpecial manner honour God. He alſo on whom God hath beſtowed wit and parts, if he employ them (not ſo much in contriving projects to advance his own petty intereſts, or in procuring vain applauſe to himſelf, as) in advantageouſly ſetting forth God's praiſe, handſomely recommending goodneſs, dexterouſly engaging men in ways of virtue (doing which things is true wit and excellent policy indeed), he doth thereby remarkably honour God. He likewiſe that hath honour conferred upon him, if he ſubordinate it to God's honour, if he uſe his own credit as an inſtrument of bringing credit to goodneſs, thereby adorning and illuſtrating piety, he by ſo doing doth eminently practiſe this duty. The like may be ſaid of any other good quality, any capacity or advantage of doing good; by the right uſe thereof we honour God: for that men, beholding the worth of ſuch good gifts, and feeling the benefit emergent from them, will be apt to bleſs the donor of them; as did they in the Goſpel, who, ſeeing our Saviour cure the paralytic man, did preſently *glorify God, who had given ſuch power unto men.* But eſpecially they to whom power and authority is committed, as they have the chief capacity, ſo they are under an eſpecial obli-

Matt. ix. 8.

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obligation thus to honour God: they are particularly concerned to hear and observe that royal proclamation, *Give unto the Lord, O ye mighty, give unto the Lord glory and strength; give unto the Lord the honour due unto his name.* When such persons (like King Nebuchadnezzar returned to his right senses) do seriously acknowledge their power and eminency derived from God alone; when they profess subjection unto him, and express it in their practice, not only driving others by their power, but drawing them by their example, to piety and goodness; when they cause God's name to be duly worshipped, and his laws to be strictly observed; when they favour and encourage virtue, discourage and chastise wickedness; when they take care that justice be impartially administered, innocence protected, necessity relieved, all iniquity and oppression, all violence and disorder, yea, so much as may be, all affliction and wretchedness be prevented, or removed; when they by all means strive to promote both the service of God, and the happiness of men (*dispensing* equally and benignly to the family over which their Lord hath set them, *their meat in due season*; providing that men under them *may live a peaceable and quiet life, in all godliness and honesty*; doing which is the business allotted to them, the interest, as it were, of God, which he declares himself concernedly to tender, and by their ministry to prosecute); when they carefully do such things, then do they indeed approve themselves worthy honourers of their high Master and heavenly King; then do they truly act God's part, and represent his person decently. When the actions of these visible gods are so divinely good and beneficial, men will be easily induced, yea, can hardly forbear to reverence and magnify the invisible Founder of their authority. By so doing, as they will set before men's eyes the best pattern of loyalty; as they will impress upon men's hearts the strongest argument for obedience and respect toward themselves;

SERM. XII.

Psal. xxix. 1, 2.

Dan. iv. 34. I blessed the most High, and praised and honoured him, &c.

Matt. xxiv. 45.

1 Tim. ii. 2.

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SERM. XII. as they ſhall both more plainly inform and more effectually perſuade people to the performance of their duty unto them, than by all the law and all the force in the world; as they will thereby conſequently beſt ſecure and maintain their own honour, and their own welfare (for men will never be heartily loyal and ſubmiſſive to authority, till they become really good; nor will they ever be very good, till they ſee their leaders ſuch): ſo they will together greatly advance the praiſe and glory of him in whoſe name they rule, to whoſe favour they owe their power and dignity;

Dan. v. 23. *in whoſe hand*, as the Prophet ſaith, *is their breath, and whoſe are all their ways.* For all men will be ready moſt awfully to dread him, unto whom they ſee princes themſelves humbly to ſtoop and bow; no man will be aſhamed or unwilling to ſerve him, whom he ſhall obſerve that his lords and governors do concern themſelves to worſhip: the world cannot but have a good opinion of him, a participation of whoſe power and majeſty yields ſuch excellent fruits; it will not fail to adore him, whoſe ſhadows and images are ſo venerable. It is a moſt notorious thing, both to reaſon and in experience, what extreme advantage great perſons have, eſpecially by the influence of their practice, to bring God himſelf, as it were, into credit: how much it is in their power eaſily to render piety a thing in faſhion and requeſt. For in what they do, they never are alone, or are ill attended; whither they go, they carry the world along with them: they lead crowds of people after them, as well when they go in the right way, as when they run aſtray. The cuſtom of living well, no leſs than other modes and garbs, will be ſoon conveyed and propagated from the court; the city and country will readily draw good manners thence (good manners truly ſo called, not only ſuperficial forms of civility, but real practices of goodneſs). For the main body of men goeth not *qua eundum, ſed qua itur*, not according to rules and reaſons, but after examples and authorities;

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rities; especially of great persons, who are like stars, shining in high and conspicuous places, by which men steer their course; their actions are to be reckoned not as single or solitary ones, but are like their persons, of a public and representative nature, involving the practice of others, who are by them awed, or shamed into compliance. Their good example especially hath this advantage, that men can find no excuse, can have no pretence why they should not follow it. Piety is not only beautified, but fortified by their dignity; it not only shines in them with a clearer lustre, but with a mightier force and influence: a word, a look (the least intimation) from them will do more good, than others' best eloquence, clearest reason, most earnest endeavours. For it is in them, if they would apply themselves to it, as the wisest prince implies, to *scatter iniquity with their eyes*. A smile of theirs were able to enliven virtue, and diffuse it all about; a frown might suffice to mortify and dissipate wickedness. Such apparently is their power of honouring God; and in proportion thereto surely great is their obligation to do it: of them peculiarly God expects it, and all equity exacts it. What the meaner rank of servants (who are employed in baser drudgeries, whose fare is more coarse, whose wages are more scant, who stand at greater distance from their Lord, and receive no such ample or express marks of his favour, what these) do is of some consequence indeed, but doth not import so much to the master's reputation; their good word concerning him, their good carriage toward him doth not credit him so much. But those whom he employs in matters of highest trust and importance to his affairs, whom he places in the nearest degree to himself (seats even in his own throne, upon his own tribunal), whom he feeds plentifully and daintily, maintains in a handsome garb, allows largely, as their deportment doth much reflect on their Lord's esteem, as they are highly capable of advancing his repute;

SERM. XII.

Prov. xx. 8.

so

SERM. XII. so all the rules of ingenuity and gratitude, all the laws of justice and equity do oblige them earnestly to endeavour it. And it is indeed no less their concernment to do so. For if there be disorders, prejudicial to the master's honour and interest, frequently committed in the family, it is those servants must be responsible: if due order be there kept to his glory and advantage, they shall chiefly be commended, and peculiarly hear the *Euge, bone serve.* They must be loaded with other men's faults, or crowned for other men's virtues, as their behaviour hath respectively contributed to them. Those universal rules of equity, proposed in the Gospel, will, in God's reckoning with and requiting men, be punctually observed: *to whomsoever much is given, of him much shall be required*; answerable to the improvement of what is delivered in trust, shall the acceptance be.

Matt. xxv. 23.

Luke xii. 48.

I have insisted somewhat more largely on this point, because our text hath a particular aspect thereon; the words being uttered upon occasion of Eli, then judge in Israel, his not using authority to these purposes; his forbearing to redress a grievous abuse, committed by his own sons, to the disservice and dishonour of God. Whence to persons of his rank is this law especially directed; upon them is this duty chiefly incumbent; on them assuredly (as sure as God is true), if they will observe the duty, the reward shall be conferred. God will certainly not only preserve the honour they have already, but will accumulate more honours on them.

These are general truths; the particular application of them is ours. God, I pray, vouchsafe his grace and blessing, that it may be made to our benefit and comfort.

III. I should now shew why the duty is required of us, or how reasonable it is. I must not (and the matter is so palpable that I need not) spend many words on that. God surely doth not exact honour from us because he needs it, because he is the better for

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for it, becauſe he, for itſelf, delights therein. For (beſide that he cannot want any thing without himſelf, that he cannot any wiſe need mortal breath to praiſe him[y], or hands of fleſh to ſerve him, who hath millions of better creatures than we abſolutely at his devotion, and can with a word create millions of millions more, fitter than we to honour him) the beſt eſtimation we can have of him is much below him; the beſt expreſſion we can make is very unworthy of him. He is infinitely excellent, beyond what we can imagine or declare: his *name is exalted above all bleſſing and praiſe*; *his glory is above the earth and heaven.* So that all our endeavours to honour him are, in compariſon to what is due, but defects, and in a manner diſparagements to him. It is only then (which ſhould affect our ingenuity to conſider) his pure goodneſs that moves him, for our benefit and advantage, to demand it of us. SERM. XII.

Neh. ix. 5. Pſ. cxlviii. 13. Ecclus. xliii. 30.

1. For that to honour God is the moſt proper work of reaſon; that for which primarily we were deſigned and framed; (for as other things were made to afford the matter and occaſion, ſo man was deſigned to exerciſe the act of glorifying God:) whence the performance thereof doth preſerve and perfect our nature; to neglect it being unnatural and monſtrous.

Sen. Ep. 76.

2. For that alſo it is a moſt pleaſant duty. He is not a man, (hath loſt all natural ingenuity and humanity) who doth not delight to make ſome returns thither, where he hath found much good will, whence he hath felt great kindneſs. Since then all the good we have, we have received from God's favour, it cannot but be very pleaſant to render ſomewhat of requital, as it were, unto him; and we can render no other but this. We cannot make God more rich,

[y] Ἀκήρατος γὰρ αὐτῷ ἡ ὑσία κ᾽ ἀπενδὴς ὖσα, ἑδενὸς ἑτέρυ προσδεῖται· εἰ ᾽ αἰνέντες αὐτὸν λαμπρότεροι γίνονται. *Chryſt. in Pſal.* cxliv. *et vide in Pſal.* ciii.

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SERM. XII. more joyful, more happy than he is: all that we can do is, to expreſs our reverence toward him.

3. For that likewiſe our honouring God diſpoſes us to the imitation of him, (for what we do reverence we would reſemble) that is, to the doing thoſe things wherein our chief perfection and happineſs conſiſts, whence our beſt content and joy doth ſpring.

4. In fine, for that the practice of this duty is moſt profitable and beneficial to us; unto it by an eternal rule of juſtice our final welfare and proſperity being annexed: whence God hath declared it to be the way and condition of our attaining that thing which we ſo like and prize, honour to ourſelves; the which by promiſe he hath engaged himſelf to confer on thoſe who honour him. And,

IV. This promiſe he makes good ſeveral ways: ſome of them I ſhall briefly ſuggeſt.

1. The honouring God is of itſelf an honourable thing; the employment which ennobles heaven itſelf, wherein the higheſt angels do rejoice and glory. It is the greateſt honour of a ſervant to bring credit to his maſter, of a ſubject to ſpread his prince's renown, and (upon grounds vaſtly more obliging) of a creature to glorify his Maker: that we may do ſo is an honour we ſhould be glad, may be proud of.

2. By honouring God we are immediately inſtated in great honour; we enter into moſt noble relations, acquire moſt illuſtrious titles, enjoy moſt glorious privileges; we become the friends and favourites of heaven, are adopted into God's family, and are ſtyled his children; do obtain a free acceſs unto him, a ſure protection under him, a ready aſſiſtance from him in all our needs. And what honour can exceed, can equal this?

3. God hath ſo ordered it, that honour is naturally conſequent upon the honouring him. God hath made goodneſs a noble and a ſtately thing; hath impreſſed upon it that beauty and majeſty which commands an univerſal love and veneration, which ſtrikes pre-

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preſently both a kindly and an awful reſpect into the minds of all men. *The righteous is* (not only in himſelf, but in common eſteem) *more excellent than his neighbour.* Power may be dreaded, riches may be courted, wit and knowledge may be admired; but only goodneſs is truly eſteemed and honoured[y]. Not only men of goodneſs and diſcretion, but even the vulgar ſort of men (yea, as Plato hath well obſerved, the worſt men) do paſs this judgment, do prefer true goodneſs above all things[z]. Prov. xii. 26.

4. God, by his extraordinary providence, as there is reaſon and occaſion, doth interpoſe, ſo as to procure honour to them, to maintain and further their reputation, who honour him. God *faſhioneth the hearts of men: the hearts* of the greateſt men *are in his hand; he turneth them as the rivers of waters, whitherſoever he will:* he conſequently raiſeth or depreſſeth us, as he pleaſes, in the judgments and affections of men. *When a man's ways pleaſe the Lord, he maketh even his enemies to be at peace with him,* ſaith the Wiſe Man; that is, he diſpoſeth the moſt averſe minds to love and honour him. No envy can ſupplant, no ſlander can deface the credit of ſuch a perſon; ſince God hath taken it into his charge and care, ſince he hath ſaid it, that *he will bring forth his righteouſneſs as the light, and his judgments as the noon day.* God alſo by ſecret methods, and undiſcernible trains, ordereth all events, managing our thoughts and deſigns, our enterprizes and actions ſo, that the reſult of them ſhall be matter of benefit, comfort, and reputation, or Pſ. xxxiii. 15. Prov. xxi. 1. Prov. xvi. 7. Pſal. xxxvii. 6. Pſal. xxx. 7. &c. 17.

[y] Γίνου τοῦ πλησίον τιμιώτερος ἐκ τοῦ φανῆναι χρηστότερος, &c. *Naz. Orat. de Paup.*

Is gloria maxime excellit, qui virtute plurimum præſtat. *Cic.*

Καὶ ἀληθεια ὁ ἀγαθὸς μόνος τιμητός. *Ariſt. Eth.* iv. 3.

Adeo gratioſa virtus eſt, ut inſitum ſit etiam malis probare meliora. *Sen. de Benef.* iv. 17.

[z] Θεῖόν τι καὶ εὔτοχόν ἐστι καὶ τοῖς κακοῖς· ὥστε πάμπολλοι τῶν σφόδρα κακῶν ἐν τοῖς λόγοις καὶ ταῖς δόξαις διαιρεῖνται τὰς ἀμείνους τῶν ἀνθρώπων, καὶ τὰς χείρους. *Plat. de Repub.* xii.

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SERM. XII. of disaster, regret, and disgrace, as he thinks good. Victory and success he absolutely disposeth of, and consequently of the honour that follows them; and they do usually attend the honourers of God: for, as it is in the Psalm, *a good success have they who keep his commandments.* Many are the instances of persons, (such as Abraham, Joseph, Moses, David, Job, and Daniel,) who, for their signal honouring of God, from a base and obscure, or from an afflicted and forlorn condition, have, in ways strange and wonderful, been advanced to eminent dignity, have been rendered most illustrious, by the providence of him, who *raiseth the poor out of the dust, and lifteth the beggar out of the dunghill, to set them among princes, and to make them inherit the throne of glory.* He doth it in an evident manner, and eminent degree, to some; he doth it in a convenient way, and competent measure, to all that honour him.

Ps. cxi. 10. Prov. iii. 4. 1 Sam. ii. 8. Ps. cvii. 41.

5. Whereas men are naturally inclined to bear much regard to the judgment of posterity concerning them, are desirous to leave a good name behind them, and to have their memory retained in esteem: God so disposes things, that *the memory of the just shall be blessed*; that *his righteousness shall be had in everlasting remembrance*; that *his light shall rejoice*, (or burn clearly and pleasantly, even when his life is put out here.) [a] No spices can so embalm a man, no monument can so preserve his name and memory, as a pious conversation, whereby God hath been honoured, and men benefited. The fame of such a person is, in the best judgments, far more precious and truly glorious, than is the fame of those who have excelled in any other deeds or qualities. For what sober man doth not in his thoughts afford a more high and

Cic. Tusc. 1. Prov. x. 7. Ps. cxii. 6. Prov. xiii. 9.

[a] Ἀνάγκη, ὡς ἔοικε, μέλειν ἡμῖν τῆ τοῦ ἔπειτα χρόνου· ἐπειδὴ τῆ τυγχάνουσι καλά τινα φύσει, οἱ μὲν ἀνδραποδωδέστατοι, οὐδὲν φροντίζοντες αὐτῆ· οἱ δ' ἐπιεικέστατοι, σῶν ποιοῦντες ὅπως ἂν εἰς τὸν ἔπειτα χρόνον εὖ ἀκούσω. *Plat. Epist.* ii.

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hearty reſpect to thoſe poor fiſhermen, who by their heroical activity and patience did honour God in the propagation of his heavenly truth, than to all thoſe Hectors in chivalry, thoſe conquerors and atchievers of mighty exploits, (thoſe Alexanders and Cæſars) who have been renowned for doing things which ſeemed great, rather than for performing what was truly good? To the honour of thoſe excellent poor men, conſpicuous monuments have been erected every where; anniverſary memorials of their names and virtues are celebrated; they are never mentioned or thought of without reſpect; their commendations are interwoven with the praiſes of their great Lord and Maker, whom they honoured[b].

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6. Laſtly, to thoſe who honour God here, God hath reſerved an honour infinitely great and excellent, in compariſon whereto all honours here are but dreams, the loudeſt acclamations of mortal men are but empty ſounds, the brighteſt glories of this world are but duſkiſh and fleeting ſhadows; an honour moſt ſolid, moſt durable; *an eternal weight of glory.* They ſhall, in the face of all the world, be approved by the moſt righteous Judge's unqueſtionable ſentence; they ſhall be eſteemed in the unanimous opinion of angels and ſaints; they ſhall be applauded by the general voice and atteſtation of heaven; they ſhall then be ſeated upon unmoveable thrones, their heads encircled with unfading crowns, their faces ſhining with rays of unconceivable glory and majeſty. The leſs of honour they have received here, in this tranſitory moment of life, the more thereof they ſhall enjoy in that future eternal ſtate; where, with him who, through the whole courſe of his life, *ſought not his own honour, but the honour of him that ſent him*; who, *for the ſuffering of death, was crowned with glory and honour*; who, *for the joy that was ſet be-*

2 Cor. iv. 17.

John viii. 49, 50. Heb. ii. 9. xii. 2.

[b] Τῶν ἡ δήλων τῶ Χριστοῦ καὶ τὰ σήματα λαμπρὰ, καὶ ἡμέραι καλαφανεῖς, ἑορτὴν τῇ οἰκουμένῃ ποιοῦσαι, &c. *Chryſ. in* 2 *Cor. Or.* 27.

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SERM. XII. *fore him, endured the croſs, deſpiſing the ſhame, and is ſet at the right hand of God*; with thoſe who conſecrated all their endeavours, and who ſacrificed their lives to the promoting of God's honour, they ſhall poſſeſs everlaſting glory. Which, together with them, God Almighty of his infinite mercy grant unto us all, through Jeſus Chriſt our Lord; to whom, with God the Father, and God the Holy Ghoſt, be for ever all honour and praiſe. Amen.

SERMON

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SERMON XIII.

Upright walking ſure walking.

PROV. x. 9.

He that walketh uprightly, walketh ſurely.

THE world is much addicted to the politics; the heads of men are very buſy in contrivance, and their mouths are full of talk about the ways of conſulting our ſafety, and ſecuring our intereſts. May we not therefore preſume, that an infallible maxim of policy, propoſing the moſt expedite and certain method of ſecurity in all our tranſactions, will be entertained with acceptance? Such an one the greateſt politician and wiſeſt man for buſineſs (if we may take God's own word for it) that ever was or will be, doth here ſuggeſt to us. For the practice couched in our text he otherwhere voucheth for a point of policy, telling us, that, *A man of underſtanding walketh uprightly:* and here he recommendeth it as a method of ſecurity, *He that walketh uprightly, walketh ſurely.*

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1 Kings iii. 12.

Prov. xv. 21.

Treating upon which *aphoriſm*, I ſhall, by God's help, endeavour, firſt, in way of explication, briefly to deſcribe the practice itſelf; then, in way of proof, by ſome conſiderations to declare, that ſecurity doth attend it.

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SERM. XIII. For explication. *To walk* (as well in the ſtyle of holy Scripture, as in other writings, and even in common ſpeech) doth ſignify our uſual courſe of dealing, or the conſtant tenor of our practice.

בתום *Uprightly*, according to the original, might be rendered, *in perfection*, or *with integrity*: and by the Greek tranſlators in ſeveral places is ſuppoſed chiefly to denote ſincerity and purity of intention.

He that walketh in his uprightneſs, feareth the Lord. Prov. xiv. 2.

In effect, the phraſe, *He that walketh uprightly*, doth import, one who is conſtantly diſpoſed in his deſigns and dealings to bear a principal regard to the rules of his duty, and the dictates of his conſcience; who in every caſe emergent is ready to perform that, which upon good deliberation doth appear moſt juſt and fit, in conformity to God's law and ſound reaſon, without being ſwayed by any appetite, any paſſion, any ſiniſter reſpect to his own private intereſt of profit, credit, or pleaſure, to the commiſſion of any unlawful, irregular, unworthy, or baſe act; who generally doth act out of good principles; (namely, reverence to God, charity to men, ſober regard to his own true welfare;) who doth aim at good ends, that is, at God's honour, public benefit, his own ſalvation, other good things ſubordinate to thoſe, or well conſiſtent with them; who doth proſecute his deſigns by lawful means, in fair ways, ſuch as honeſt providence and induſtry, veracity and fidelity, dependence upon God's help, and prayer for his bleſſing: in ſhort, one who never adviſedly doth undertake any bad thing, nor any good thing to ill purpoſes; nor doth uſe any foul means to compaſs his intents.

For proof. That ſuch an one doth ever proceed with much ſecurity, from the following conſiderations may appear.

I. An upright walker is ſecure of eaſily finding his way. For it commonly requireth no reach of wit or depth of judgment, no laborious diligence of enquiry, no curious intentneſs of obſervation, no ſolicitous

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licitous care, or plodding ſtudy, to diſcern in any case what is juſt; we need not much trouble our heads about it, for we can hardly be to ſeek for it. If we will but open our eyes, it lieth in view before us, being the plain, ſtraight, obvious road, which common reaſon prompteth, or which ordinary inſtruction pointeth out to us: ſo that uſually that direction of Solomon is ſufficient, *Let thine eyes look right on, and let thine eye-lids look ſtraight before thee——Turn not to the right hand, nor to the left.* SERM. XIII. Prov. iv. 25. 27. xvii. 24. xiv. 6.

The ways of iniquity and vanity, (if we may call them *ways*, which indeed are but exorbitances and ſeductions from the way,) ill deſigns and bad means of executing deſigns, are very unintelligible, very obſcure, abſtruſe, and intricate; being infinitely various, and utterly uncertain: ſo that out of them to pick and fix on this or that may puzzle our heads, and perplex our hearts; as to purſue any of them may involve us in great difficulty and trouble. But the ways of truth, of right, of virtue, are ſo very ſimple and uniform, ſo fixed and permanent, ſo clear and notorious, that we can hardly miſs them, or (except wilfully) ſwerve from them. For they by divine wiſdom were chalked out, not only for ingenious and ſubtle perſons, (men of great parts, of refined wits, of long experience,) but rather for the vulgar community of men, the great body of God's ſubjects, conſiſting in perſons of meaneſt capacity, and ſmalleſt improvement: being deſigned to *make wiſe the ſimple*, to *give the young man knowledge and diſcretion*; to direct all ſorts of people in their duty, toward their happineſs; according to that in the Prophet, *A high way ſhall be there, and it ſhall be called, The way of holineſs——the way-faring men, though fools, ſhall not err therein.* Pſal. xix. 7. cxix. 130. Prov. viii. 5. 1. 4. Pſal. cxix. 9. Iſa. xxxv. 8. Ὁδὸς καθαρά. LXX.

They are in very legible characters graven by the finger of God upon our hearts and conſciences, ſo that by any conſiderate reflection inwards we may eaſily Rom. ii. 15. Iſa. xxx. 21. Pſal. xxxvii. 31.

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SERM. XIII. eaſily read them: or they are extant in God's word, there written as with a ſun-beam, ſo perſpicuouſly expreſſed, ſo frequently inculcated, that without groſs negligence or ſtrange dulneſs we cannot but deſcry them. For who with half an eye may not ſee, that the practice of pious love and reverence toward God, of entire juſtice and charity toward our neighbour, of ſober temperance and purity toward ourſelves, is approved by reaſon, is preſcribed by God to us?

Prov. iv. 19. ii. 13. 15. Jo. viii. 12. Pſal. lxxxii. 5. cxxv. 5. xxxv. 6. lxxiii. 18. Jer. xxiii. 12. * Heb. xii. 13. Pſal. v. 8. Luke iii. 5. Prov. iii. 23. Deut. v. 32. xxviii. 14. + Prov. iv. 18. viii. 8. 9. xiv. 6. Πάντα ἐνώπια τοῖς συνιοῦσι, LXX. Pſal. xxvi. 12. xxxvii. 31. xxvi. 1. xvii. 5. xviii. 36. Prov. xi. 3. &c. Pſ. xxv. 4. xvi. 11. xvii. 5. cxliii. 10. cxxxix. 24. cxix. 10. 27. 33. 35. &c. Iſa. xxx. 21. Pſal. xxv. 9. 12. xxxvii. 23.

Hence in the holy Scriptures, as bad ways are called dark, crooked, rough, ſlippery ways; ſo the good ways are ſaid to be * clear, plain, direct, even ways. + *The path of the juſt*, ſay they, *is as a ſhining light. All the words of my mouth are plain to him that underſtandeth*, (or, *that conſidereth* them.) *My foot ſtandeth in an even place. The law of his God is in his heart: and none of his ſteps ſhall ſlide.*

Hence it is affirmed, that an upright man doth hardly need any conduct beſide his own honeſty. For, *The integrity*, ſaith Solomon, *of the upright ſhall guide them*; and, *The righteouſneſs of the perfect ſhall direct his way.*

But in caſe ſuch an one ſhould ever be at a ſtand or at a loſs, in doubt of his courſe, he hath always at hand a moſt ſure guide to conduct or direct him. It is but aſking the way of him, or ſaying, with the Pſalmiſt, *Shew me thy ways, O Lord, teach me thy paths; Teach me to do thy will*, and, *lead me in the way everlaſting; O let me not wander from thy commandments:* and then *his ears*, as the Prophet ſaith, *ſhall hear a word behind him, ſaying, This is the way, walk ye in it*; then the words of the Pſalmiſt ſhall be verified, *What man is he that feareth the Lord? Him ſhall he teach in the way that he ſhall chooſe. The meek will he guide in judgment, and the meek he will teach his way.*

Hence is the upright man happily ſecured from tiring

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tiring pains in the ſearch, from racking anxieties in the choice, from grating ſcruples and galling regrets in the purſuit of his way. SERM. XIII.

II. The upright walker doth tread upon firm ground. He doth build his practice, not upon the perilous bogs, the treacherous quagmires, the devouring quickſands of uncouth, bold, impious paradoxes, (ſuch as have been vented by Epicurus, by Machiavel, by others more lately, whoſe infamous names are too well known, as the effects of their peſtilent notions are too much felt;) but upon ſolid, ſafe, approved, and well-tried principles; *viz.* theſe, and the like coherent with them: That there is an eternal God, incomprehenſibly powerful, wiſe, juſt, and good; who is always preſent with us, and ever intent upon us; viewing not only all our external actions, (open and ſecret) but our inmoſt cogitations, deſires, and intentions, by the which our actions chiefly are to be eſtimated: that he, as governor of the world, and judge of men, doth concern himſelf in all human affairs, diſpoſing and managing all events according to his righteous pleaſure; exacting punctual obedience to his laws, and diſpenſing recompences anſwerable thereto; with impartial juſtice rewarding each man according to the purpoſes of his heart and the practices of his life: that all our good and happineſs doth abſolutely depend on God's favour; ſo that to pleaſe him can only be true wiſdom, and to offend him the greateſt folly: that virtue is incomparably the beſt endowment whereof we are capable, and ſin the worſt miſchief to which we are liable: that no worldly good or evil is conſiderable in compariſon with goods or evils ſpiritual: that nothing can be really profitable or advantageous to us, which doth not conſiſt with our duty to God, doth not ſomewiſe conduce to our ſpiritual intereſt and eternal welfare: yea, that every thing not ſerviceable to thoſe purpoſes is either a frivolous trifle, or a dangerous ſnare, or a notable damage, or a woful bane to us: (Prov. xii. 5.)

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SERM. XIII. that content of mind, ſpringing from innocence of life, from the faithful diſcharge of our duty, from ſatisfaction of conſcience, from a good hope in regard to God and our future ſtate, is in our eſteem and choice much to be preferred before all the delights which any temporal poſſeſſion or fruition can afford; and, that a bad mind is the ſoreſt adverſity which can befal us. Such are the grounds of upright practice, more firm than any rock, more unſhakeable than the foundations of heaven and earth; the which are aſſured by the ſacred oracles, and atteſted by many remarkable providences; have ever been avowed by the wiſer ſort, and admitted by the general conſent of men, as for their truth, moſt agreeable to reaſon, and for their uſefulneſs, approved by conſtant experience. The belief of them having apparently moſt wholeſome influence upon all the concerns of life both public and private; indeed, being abſolutely needful for upholding government, and preſerving human ſociety; no obligation, no faith or confidence between men, no friendſhip or peace being able to ſubſiſt without it. Whence the practice built on ſuch foundations muſt be very ſecure. And if God ſhall not ceaſe to be, if he will not let go the reins, if his word cannot deceive, if the wiſeſt men are not infatuated, if the common ſenſe of mankind do not prove extravagant, if the main props of life and pillars of ſociety do not fail; he that walketh uprightly, doth proceed on ſure grounds.

III. The upright perſon doth walk ſteadily, maintaining his principal reſolutions, and holding his main courſe, through all occaſions, without flinching or wavering, or deſultory inconſiſtence and fickleneſs; his integrity being an excellent ballaſt, holding him tight and well poiſed in his deportment; ſo that waves of temptation daſhing on him do not make him roll in uncertainty, or topple over into unworthy practices.

Luſt, paſſion, humour, intereſt, are things very mutable,

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table, as depending upon temper of body, caſualties of time, the winds and tides of this vertiginous world: whence he that is guided or moved by them muſt needs be *many-minded* and *unſtable in all his ways*; will *reel to and fro like a drunken man, and be at his wit's end*; never enjoying any ſettled reſt of mind, or obſerving a ſmooth tenor of action. But a good conſcience is very ſtable, and perſiſteth unvaried through all circumſtances of time, in all viciſſitudes of fortune. For it ſteereth by immoveable pole-ſtars, the inviolable rules of duty; it aimeth at marks which no force can ſtir out of their place; its objects of mind and affection are not tranſitory; its hopes and confidences are fixed on the *rock of ages*. Whence an upright perſon in all caſes, and all conditions, (proſperous or adverſe) is the ſame man, and goeth the ſame way. Contingences of affairs do not unhinge his mind from its good purpoſes, or divert his foot from the right courſe. Let the weather be fair or foul, let the world ſmile or frown, let him get or loſe by it, let him be favoured or croſſed, commended or reproached, *(by honour and diſhonour, by evil report and good report,)* he will do what his duty requireth: the external ſtate of things muſt not alter the moral reaſon of things with him. This is that which the Pſalmiſt obſerveth of him; *He ſhall not be afraid of evil tidings, for his heart ſtandeth faſt, and believeth in the Lord. His heart is ſtabliſhed, and will not ſhrink.* And this the Wiſe Man promiſeth to him; *Commit thy works unto the Lord, and thy thoughts ſhall be eſtabliſhed.*

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Jam. i. 8. Pſ. cvii. 27. Τετράγωνος. Juſtum et tenacem propoſiti virum &c. *Hor.* 2 Cor. vi. 8. Pſal. cxii. 7, 8. Prov. iii. 25. Prov. xvi. 3.

Hence a man is ſecured from diffidence in himſelf, and diſtraction in his mind, from frequently being off the hooks, from leading an unequal life, clathing with itſelf, from deluding and diſappointing thoſe with whom he converſeth or dealeth, and conſequently from the inconveniences iſſuing thence.

IV. The way of uprightneſs is the ſureſt for diſpatch, and the ſhorteſt cut toward the execution or attainment of any good purpoſe; ſecuring a man from

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SERM. XIII. from irkſome expectations and tedious delays, the which, as the Wiſe Man ſaith, *do make the heart ſick.*

Prov. xiii. 12. Luke iii. 5. It in Scripture is called *the ſtraight and the plain way.* And as in geometry, of all lines or ſurfaces contained within the ſame bounds, the ſtraight line and the plain ſurface are the ſhorteſt; ſo it is alſo in morality: by the right line of juſtice upon the plain ground of virtue, a man ſooneſt will arrive to any well-choſen end.

In this way there are no bewildering intrigues and mazes, no crooked windings and turnings, no occaſions forcing men to dance hither and thither, to ſkip backward and forward, to do and undo; which courſes do protract buſineſs, and commonly do hinder from ever diſpatching it. But a man acting juſtly and fairly, doth continually proceed on in the direct open road, without retreat, excurſion, or deflection;

Prov. iv. 27. Deut. v. 32. xxviii. 14. *not turning aſide* (as the phraſe is in holy writ) *to the right hand, or to the left.*

To clamber over fences of duty, to break through hedges of right, to treſpaſs upon hallowed encloſures, may ſeem the moſt ſhort and compendious ways of getting thither where one would be: but doth not a man venture breaking his neck, or ſcratching his face, incurring miſchief and trouble thereby? is he not lia-

Eccleſ. x. 8. ble to the fate to which the Preacher doometh him, *He that diggeth a pit ſhall fall into it: and whoſo breaketh a hedge, a ſerpent ſhall bite him?* For inſtance, to grow rich, fraud, extortion, corruption, oppreſſion, overreaching and ſupplanting may ſeem the readieſt and moſt expedite ways; but in truth they are the fartheſt ways about, or rather no ways at all: for that which is got by thoſe means is not our own; nor is the poſſeſſion of it truly wealth, but uſurpation, or detention of ſpoil and rapine, which we ought to diſgorge. And however to the getting it there are often mighty difficulties occurring from men, there are commonly inſuperable obſtacles interpoſed by God;

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God; who hath expreſsly condemned and curſed SERM. thoſe ways, declaring that, *Wealth gotten by vanity* (or XIII. cozenage) *ſhall be diminiſhed*; that *he that oppreſſeth——— to increaſe his riches, ſhall ſurely come to want*; that *he* Prov. xiii. *who* (thus) *haſteth to be rich, hath an evil eye, and con-* 11. xxii. 16. xxviii. 22. *ſidereth not that poverty ſhall come upon him*; that *as* 20. xxi. 6. *the partridge ſitteth on eggs, and hatcheth them not; ſo* Jer. xvii. 11. *he that getteth riches, and not by right, ſhall leave them in the midſt of his days, and at his end ſhall be a fool.* Whereas the plain way of honeſt harmleſs induſtry, (joined with a pious regard to him who is the diſpenſer of all good things) how ſlow ſoever it may ſeem, is the moſt ſpeedy, becauſe the only ſafe way to thrive; having, beſide all ſecondary advantages, the ſecurity of thoſe oracles: *The hand of the diligent* Prov. x. 4. *ſhall make rich: He that gathereth by labour, ſhall in-* xxviii. 19. xiii. 11. *creaſe: By humility and the fear of the Lord are riches,* xxii. 4. *and honour, and life.* Pſal. cxii. 3.

V. The way of uprightneſs is in itſelf very ſafe, free of danger, tending to no miſchief; according to thoſe ſayings of the Wiſe Man; *There ſhall no evil* Prov. xxviii. *happen to the juſt*; *In the way of righteouſneſs is life*; 18. xvi. 17. xiii. 6. x. *and in the path thereof there is no death.* 29. xii. 21.

He who deſigneth only that which is juſt and 28. reaſonable, who innocently and fairly proſecuteth his intent, can run no great hazard, cannot fall into any extreme diſaſter, cannot irrecoverably ſink into miſerable diſappointment.

He probably will not receive much harm from Pſ. xxxvii. men, or trouble from the world: for, as he meaneth 24. innocently, as he dealeth inoffenſively, (not violently aſſailing, not fraudulently circumventing, not any wiſe injuriouſly or maliciouſly abuſing any man,) as he doth yield no juſt provocation or urgent temptation to oppoſe him; ſo he is not very likely to meet with obſtructions or croſſes thwarting his deſigns. He can hardly raiſe up adverſaries; at leaſt ſuch as will prove very formidable, or very fierce and implacable toward him.

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SERM. XIII.

He may be ſure that few wiſe men, and no good men, will trouble him; but that ſuch rather will afford their countenance and furtherance to his undertakings.

But aſſuredly he ſhall have the favourable protection of Almighty God, who throughly knowing his heart, and obſerving the righteouſneſs of his intentions and proceedings, will not ſuffer him to incur any notable, deſtructive, remedileſs calamity. His prayer, dictated by good conſcience, *Let integrity and uprightneſs preſerve me*, will certainly be heard; God having paſſed his word for it in numberleſs places of Scripture; particularly in thoſe remarkable words of Iſaiah: * *He that walketh righteouſly and ſpeaketh uprightly; he that deſpiſeth the gain of oppreſſions, that ſhaketh his hands from holding of bribes, that ſtoppeth his ears from hearing of blood, and ſhutteth his eyes from ſeeing evil; he ſhall dwell on high, his place of defence ſhall be the munitions of rocks; his bread ſhall be given him, his water ſhall be ſure.* That is, a man who is conſtantly upright in his dealings, ſhall by the divine providence be infallibly and impregnably preſerved from any grievous miſchief, from any ſore want, from any extreme diſtreſs.

Pſal. xxv. 21. Prov. xiii. 6. xi. 6. Prov. ii. 7. xviii. 10. xxviii. 18. xxix. 25. Pſal. xviii. 2. 30. 35. xxiii. 4. xxiv. 4, 5. Job xi. 14, 15. *Iſa. xxxiii. 15, 16.

The way of uprightneſs is ever guarded with Angels, ready to promote the affairs of the honeſt perſon, or at leaſt to protect him from evil. He may hopefully ſay to himſelf, as Abraham did to his ſervant, *The Lord, before whom I walk, will ſend his Angel with thee, and proſper thy way:* or he confidently may apply to himſelf that of the Pſalmiſt, *He ſhall give his Angels charge over thee, to keep thee in all thy ways: They ſhall bear thee up in their hands, leſt thou daſh thy foot againſt a ſtone.*

Gen. xxiv. 40. Pſal. xci. 11, 12.

However, the ſequel will be tolerable: whatever the ſucceſs of his undertaking be, it can be no ruin, no ſlur, no heart-breaking to him. His conſcience is ſafe, his credit is entire, his hopes are good; he is perfectly ſecure from being tainted with foul guilt, from being

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being expoſed to due reproach, from being ſtung with vexatious remorſe, from being plunged into a gulf of deſperation or diſconſolateneſs. For, SERM. XIII.

VI. The way of uprightneſs is fair and pleaſant. He that walketh in it hath good weather, and a clear ſky about him; a hopeful confidence and a cheerful ſatisfaction do ever wait upon him. *It is joy,* as the Wiſe Man ſaith, *to the juſt to do judgment.* Prov. xxi. 15.

Being conſcious to himſelf of an honeſt meaning, and a due courſe of proſecuting it, he feeleth no check or ſtruggling of mind, no regret or ſting of heart; being throughly ſatisfied and pleaſed with what he is about, his judgment approving, and his will acquieſcing in his procedure, as worthy of himſelf, agreeable to reaſon, and conformable to his duty. (Prov. xxiii. 17, 18.)

He therefore briſkly moveth forward with alacrity and courage; there being within him nothing to control or countermand him, to pull him back, to make him halt, to diſtract or diſturb him.

Nor hardly can any thing abroad diſmay or diſcourage him. For he may reaſonably hope for the good will of men, and cannot hugely dread their oppoſition. He may ſtrongly preſume upon the propitious aſpect and favourable ſuccour of Heaven, which always ſmileth and caſteth benign influences on honeſt undertakings. Prov. xi. 20.

He that hath choſen a good way, may with aſſurance commend his way to God's providence; he may depend upon God for his concurrent benediction; he with an humble boldneſs may addreſs prayers to God for his protection and aid. He ſo doing hath intereſt in divers clear declarations and expreſs promiſes of good ſucceſs; ſuch as theſe; *Commit thy way unto the Lord, truſt alſo in him, and he ſhall bring it to paſs. The Lord is nigh unto all that call upon him in truth: he will fulfil the deſire of them that fear him; he will hear their cry, and will ſave them.* Jer. xxxii. 19. Prov. xxiv. 14. Heb. iv. 16. Pſ. xxxvii. 5. lv. 22. Prov. xvi. 3. Eccl. ii. 10. Pſal. xxxiv. 22. xxvi. 1. xxxiii. 21. Prov. x. 24. Pſ. cxlv. 18, 19. xxxiv. 15. xxvi. 11. Job xxii. 27.

He may dare to refer his caſe to the ſevereſt ex-

 amination,

SERM. XIII. amination, ſaying with Job, *Let me be weighed in an even balance, that God may know mine integrity*; and with the Pſalmiſt, *Judge me, O Lord, according to my righteouſneſs, and according to mine integrity that is in me.*

Job xxxi. 6. Pſal. vii. 8. xxvi. 1.

He with an humble confidence can appeal to God, borrowing the words of Hezekiah, *I beſeech thee, O Lord, remember how I have walked before thee in truth and with a perfect heart, and have done that which is good in thy ſight.*

2 Kings xx. 3.

Prov. x. 28. Hence, *The hope of the righteous*, as the Wiſe Man telleth us, *is gladneſs*. He conſidering the goodneſs, the juſtice, the fidelity of God, whereof his integrity doth render him capable and a proper object, cannot but conceive a comfortable hope of a good iſſue.

And obtaining ſucceſs, he doth not only enjoy the material pleaſure thereof, but the formal ſatisfaction that it is indeed good ſucceſs, or a bleſſing indulged to him by ſpecial favour of God; enabling him to ſay with the Pſalmiſt, *The Lord rewarded me according to my righteouſneſs; according to the cleanneſs of my hands hath he recompenſed me. For I have kept the ways of the Lord, and have not wickedly departed from my God.*

Pſal. xviii. 20, 21.

However, an upright dealer hath this comfortable reſerve, that whatever doth befal him, however the buſineſs goeth, he ſhall not condemn and puniſh himſelf with remorſe; he ſhall not want a conſolation able to ſupport and to erect his mind. He ſhall triumph, if not in the felicity of his ſucceſs, yet in the integrity of his heart, and the innocence of his deportment; even as bleſſed Job did under all the preſſures of his adverſity: for, *Till I die*, ſaid he, *I will not remove mine integrity from me. My righteouſneſs I hold faſt, and will not let it go: my heart ſhall not reproach me ſo long as I live.*

(Prov. xxiv. 16.)

Job xxvii. 5, 6.

So true it is upon all accounts, that, according to that aſſertion in the Pſalm, *Light is ſown for the righteous, and joyful gladneſs for the upright in heart.*

Pſal. xcvii. 11.

VII.

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SERM. XIII.

VII. He that walketh uprightly is ſecure as to his honour and credit. He is ſure not to come off diſgracefully, either at home in his own apprehenſions, or abroad in the eſtimations of men. He doth not bluſh at what he is doing, nor doth reproach himſelf for what he hath done. No blemiſh or blame can ſtick upon his proceeding.

By pure integrity a man firſt maintaineth a due reſpect and eſteem for himſelf, then preſerveth an entire reputation with others: he reflecteth on his own heart with complacence, and looketh upon the world with confidence. He hath no fear of being detected, or care to ſmother his intents. He is content that his thoughts ſhould be ſounded, and his actions ſifted to the bottom. He could even wiſh that his breaſt had windows, that his heart were tranſparent, that all the world might ſee through him, and deſcry the clearneſs of his intentions. The more curiouſly his ways are marked, the more exactly his dealings are ſcanned, the more throughly his deſigns are penetrated and known; the greater approbation he is ſure to receive.

The iſſue of things aſſuredly will be creditable to him; and when the day-light hath ſcattered all miſts, hath cleared all miſpriſions and miſtakes, his reputation will ſhine moſt brightly: the event declaring, that he had no corrupt ends; the courſe of his proceedings being juſtified by the very light of things.

God himſelf will be concerned to vindicate his reputation, not ſuffering him to be conſiderably defamed; according to that promiſe, *He ſhall bring forth thy righteouſneſs as the light, and thy judgment as the noon-day.* That in Job will be made good to him, *Then ſhalt thou lift up thy face without ſpot:* and he may confidently aver with the Pſalmiſt, *Then ſhall I not be aſhamed, when I have reſpect to all thy commandments.*

Pſ. xxxvii. 6. 19. xxxiv. 15. 1 Pet. ii. 6. Job xi. 15. Pſ. cxix. 6, 39. 46.

If he findeth good ſucceſs, it will not be invidious,

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SERM. XIII. appearing well deſerved, and fairly procured: it will be truly honourable, as a fruit and recompence of virtue, as a mark and pledge of the divine favour toward him.

Pſal. xci. 15.

If he ſeemeth diſappointed, yet he will not be diſparaged: wiſe and candid men will excuſe him; good men will patronize his cauſe; no man of ſenſe and ingenuity will inſult on his misfortune. *He ſhall not*, as the Pſalmiſt aſſureth, *be aſhamed in an evil time*. Yea, often his repute from under a cloud will ſhine, if not with ſo glaring ſplendor, yet with a pleaſant luſtre; uprightneſs diſpoſing him to bear adverſe events with a graceful decency.

Pſ. xxxvii. 19.

VIII. The particular methods of acting which uprightneſs diſpoſeth to obſerve, do yield great ſecurity from troubles and croſſes in their tranſactions.

Prov. xiii. 5. Pſal. xxxvi. 3, 4. xxxiv. 13. xv. 2.

What is the conduct of the upright man? He is clear, frank, candid, harmleſs, conſiſtent in all his behaviour, his diſcourſe, his dealing. His heart commonly may be ſeen in his face, his mind doth ever ſuit with his ſpeech, his deeds have a juſt correſpondence with his profeſſions; he never faileth to perform what he doth promiſe, and to ſatisfy the expectations which he hath raiſed.

He doth not wrap himſelf in clouds, that none may ſee where he is, or know how to find him; may diſcern what he is about, or whither he tendeth.

Prov. x. 18.

He diſguiſeth not his intents with fallacious pretences of conſcience, of public good, of ſpecial friendſhip and reſpect.

He doth uſe no diſingenuous, ſpiteful, unjuſt tricks or ſleights, to ſerve the preſent turn.

Jer. v. 26. (Pſ. lxiv. 5. lvi. 6. ix. 15.

He layeth no baits or ſnares *to catch men*, alluring them into miſchief or inconvenience.

vii. 15. x. 2. lvii. 6. xxxv. 7. cxl. 5. Prov. xxvi.

As he doth not affect any poor baſe ends, ſo he will not defile his fair intentions by ſordid means of compaſſing them; ſuch as are illuſive ſimulations

27. Eccleſ. x. 8.) Pſal. x. 7. lv. 21. lxiv. 6. x. 9, 10. lvi. 5. Rom. xvi. 18. Eccluſ. xix. 26. 2 Sam. xv. 5. Prov. xi. 9. xxvi. 25.

and

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and ſubdolous artifices, treacherous colluſions, ſly inſinuations and ſycophantic detractions, verſatile whifflings and dodgings, flattering colloguings and glozings, ſervile crouchings and fawnings, and the like. SERM. XIII.

He hath little of the ſerpent, (none of its lurking inſidiouſneſs, of its ſurpriſing violence, of its rancorous venom, of its keen mordacity,) but much of the dove, (all its ſimplicity, its gentleneſs, its fidelity, its innocence,) in his converſation and commerce.

His wiſdom is ever tempered with ſincerity, and ſeaſoned with humanity, with meekneſs, with charity; being *the wiſdom which is from above, firſt pure,* Jam. iii. 17. *then peaceable, gentle, eaſy to be entreated, full of good fruits, without partiality, and without hypocriſy.*

He ſometime may prudently reſerve his mind, not venting it by fooliſh loquacity: but his words do never claſh with his meaning, ſo as to deceive or diſappoint any man. Prov. xiv. 33. xxix. 11. xiii. 3. 16. xxi. 23. xii. 23. Eccluſ. xx. 7.

He may warily prevent harm and decline perils: but it is without hurtful countermining, or deriving miſchief on his neighbour. Prov. xxii. 3. xxvii. 12. xiv. 8. 15, 16.

He may diſcreetly pick out ſeaſons, and embrace opportunities of righting or benefitting himſelf: but he never will ſeek or lay hold of advantages to prejudice others. Eccleſ. viii. 5.

He ſometimes may repreſs inſurrections of anger or diſguſt: but he never doth allow them to bake into rancour or malice. Prov. xii. 16. xix. 11.

He may be apt to uſe courteous, affable, obliging demeanour, ſerving to breed friendſhips, and to ſtifle enmities: but he never thereby meaneth to gull, inveigle, and entrap men; or to procure inſtruments and aids of any perverſe deſign.

He is no enemy to himſelf, but (according to the obligations of reaſon and conſcience) he hath always a regard to the good of others; nor is ever ſo ſelfiſh, as to be unjuſt or uncharitable to any man.

The principal engines he doth employ for achiev-

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SERM. XIII. ing his enterprizes are, a careful and cautious provi-
dence in contriving, a ſedulous and ſteady diligence
in acting, a circumſpect heedfulneſs not to provoke
any man by offenſive carriage, by injury, by diſcour-
teſy, to obſtruct him, but rather by kind demonſtra-
tions and real beneficence to engage men to further
him in his proceedings: but eſpecially his main in-
ſtrument, wherein he moſt confideth, is devout ſup-
plication to God for his ſuccour and bleſſing.

Now is not this conduct the moſt ſecure that can be? doth it not afford many great commodities and advantages? doth it not exempt from manifold fears, and cares, and croſſes, and ſlaveries?

Prov. xii. 19. 22. It cannot but derive bleſſings from the God of truth, the great friend of ſimplicity and ſincerity, the hater of falſehood and guile.

And humanly regarding things, he that uſeth theſe methods, doth from them obtain many conveniences. He doth not lie under perpetual conſtraint, engaged to keep a conſtant guard upon himſelf, to watch his memory, to curb his tongue, to manage his very looks and geſtures, leſt they betray his intentions, and diſcloſe his plots. He is not at the trouble of ſtopping holes, of mending flaws, of patching up repugnances in his actions, that his mind do not break through them. He is not afraid of the diſappointment and ſhame which attend the detection of unworthy deſigns. He is not at pains to obviate the jealouſies, the ſurmiſes, the diffidences, the counterplots, the preventive oppoſitions and aſ-

Prov. xxvi. 25. x. 18. xxi. 6. Pſal. xxvi. 4. faults, which gloomy cloſeneſs and crafty diſſimulation ever do raiſe againſt the practiſers of them. In fine, men do not ſhun the converſation and the commerce of an upright perſon, but gladly do conſort and deal with him; do ſeek his acquaintance and alliance: they are not apt to diſtruſt him, to ſuſpect him, to be ſhy and reſerved in their intercourſe with him; but readily do place an entire confidence in him, and uſe a clear frankneſs toward him. No man doth

doth fear him as dangerous, or will croſs him as an adverſary. Whence as he ſeldom hath cauſe to fear, or occaſion to conteſt with others; ſo he doth undiſturbedly enjoy the benefits of ſociety with great ſafety, eaſe, and comfort. SERM. XIII.

IX. Laſtly, An upright walker hath perfect ſecurity, as to the final reſult of affairs, that he ſhall not be quite baffled in his expectations and deſires. And if proſperity doth conſiſt in a ſatisfaction of mind concerning events, he cannot fail of moſt proſperous ſucceſs. *Whatſoever he doeth*, ſaith the Pſalmiſt of him, *it ſhall proſper*. How is that? Doth he, if he warreth, always get the victory? is he perpetually, when he tradeth, a conſiderable gainer? will he certainly, after ſowing, reap a plentiful crop? Probably yes; and perhaps no. Yet aſſuredly he ſhall proſper, in the true notion of proſperity, explained by thoſe divine ſayings: *Mark the perfect man, and behold the upright; for the end of that man is peace. The work of righteouſneſs ſhall be peace, and the effect of righteouſneſs quietneſs and aſſurance for ever. Surely I knew it ſhall be well with them that fear God.* Pſal. i. 3. Prov. xii. 21. Pſ. xxxvii. 37. Iſa. xxxii. 17. Eccleſ. viii. 12.

He cannot be much defeated in his purpoſes: for, as to his general, principal, abſolute deſigns, (that is, his deſign of pleaſing God, and procuring his favour; his deſign of ſatisfying himſelf, and diſcharging his conſcience; his deſign of promoting his own ſpiritual intereſt, and ſaving his ſoul; his deſign of doing good, of exerciſing charity to his neighbour, of ſerving the public, of obliging the world by virtuous example, and by real beneficence;) theſe he cannot fail throughly to accompliſh; nothing can obſtruct him in the proſecution, nothing can debar him from the execution of theſe undertakings; in ſpite of all the world, by the ſuccour of that divine grace which ever doth favour and further ſuch deſigns, he moſt happily will achieve them. And for other inferior deſigns, he can hardly be croſſed in regard to them: for it is an eſſential part of integrity, not otherwiſe

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SERM. XIII. to affect or aim at private ſecular intereſts, than under condition, and with a reſervation, if it be God's pleaſure, if it ſeem good to divine wiſdom. He knoweth that his pains employed on any honeſt purpoſe, in a fair way, (be it to procure ſome worldly advantage for himſelf, for his relations, or for his friend,) are not loſt, if they have the fruit of ſubmiſſion to God's will, and acquieſcence in the event diſpoſed by him. He is aſſured that it is good luck to have his project blaſted, and that miſſing is better than getting, when by ſovereign wiſdom it is ſo determined. He therefore could not ſo fix his heart, or engage his affection in any ſuch concern, that his mind is ſurpriſed, or his paſſions diſcompoſed by a ſeeming adverſeneſs of events to his endeavours. So that in effect he can have no bad ſucceſs. For how can that occurrence be deemed bad, which plain reaſon dictateth in certain judgment to be moſt expedient for him; about which he ever was very indifferent, and with which at preſent he is not heartily diſpleaſed? How can it be taken for diſappointment and misfortune, which one was prepared to embrace with ſatisfaction and complacence?

Yea, to a perſon ſo diſpoſed, that ſucceſs which ſeemeth moſt adverſe, juſtly may be reputed the beſt and moſt happy, as promoting ends incomparably more excellent than any worldly gain; as producing fruits, exceedingly more wholeſome and more ſavoury than any temporal commodity; as exerciſing and improving the divineſt virtues, (humility, patience, meekneſs, moderation, contentedneſs) a grain whereof is worth all the wealth, all the preferment, all that is deſirable in the world.

Wherefore let the worſt that can arrive, (or that which human blindneſs and fondneſs do count the worſt,) yet upright perſons do not come off ill, or ſo (matters being rightly ſtated) as to be loſers upon the foot of the account.

If this do not ſatisfy groſſer apprehenſions, we may add,

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add, that even in theſe meaner concerns Almighty God is pleaſed commonly to reward and encourage upright perſons by the beſt ſucceſs. For he hath as it were a natural inclination to gratify thoſe who deſire to pleaſe him; and, as the Pſalmiſt expreſſeth it, *hath pleaſure in the proſperity of his ſervants.* He may ſeem concerned in honour to countenance thoſe who have regard to his will, and who repoſe confidence in his aid; diſcriminating them from ſuch as preſume to act againſt or without him, in defiance to his will, with no deference to his Providence. As they do render him his due reſpect, by ſubmitting to his authority, and avowing his power; ſo he will acknowledge them by ſignally favouring their concerns. Even his truth and fidelity are engaged in their behalf; ſeeing he very often hath declared and promiſed, that in all matters, and upon all occaſions, he will be ready to bleſs them.

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Pſal. xxxv. 27. Prov. xi. 20. xv. 9. Prov. xiv. 2. Deut. xxviii. 2. xxx. 9. Pſ. cxxviii. 1, 2. xci. 1. xxxiv. 9, 10. lxxxiv. 11. Matt. vi. 33. Eccleſ. viii. 5. Prov. xxviii. 10. xx. 6. (Prov. xi. 18.)

X. To conclude; It is an infinite advantage of upright dealing, that at the laſt iſſue, when all things ſhall be moſt accurately tried and impartially decided, a man is aſſured to be fully juſtified in it, and plentifully rewarded for it. As then all the deceits, which now paſs under ſpecious maſks, ſhall be laid bare; all varniſh of pretence ſhall be wiped off; all perverſe intrigues ſhall be unravelled; all wicked and baſe intentions ſhall be quite ſtripped of the veils which now enfold them; all ſhrewd contrivers and engineers of miſchief, all practiſers of unjuſt and malicious guile, ſhall be expoſed to ſhame, *ſhall lie down in ſorrow:* ſo then *the righteous man ſhall ſtand in great boldneſs*; his caſe will be rightly ſtated, and fully cleared from ſlanderous aſperſions, from odious ſurmiſes, from unlucky prejudices and miſtakes: what he hath done ſhall be approved; what he hath ſuffered ſhall be repaired. So that it then evidently will appear, that upright ſimplicity is the deepeſt wiſdom, and perverſe craft the meereſt ſhallowneſs; that he who is true and juſt to others, is moſt faithful

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SERM. XIII. ful and friendly to himſelf; that whoever doth abuſe his neighbour, is his own greateſt cheater and foe. For, *In the day when God ſhall judge the ſecrets of men by Jeſus Chriſt, every man's work ſhall be made manifeſt. The Lord will bring to light the hidden things of darkneſs, and will make manifeſt the counſels of the hearts; and then ſhall every man have praiſe of God.* Unto which our upright Judge, *the King eternal, immortal, inviſible, the only wiſe God, be honour and glory for ever and ever. Amen.*

Rom. ii. 16. 1 Cor. iii. 13. iv. 5. 1 Tim. i. 17.

SERMON

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SERMON XIV.

Of the Duty of Prayer.

1 THESS. v. 17.

Pray without ceaſing.

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IT is the manner of St. Paul in his Epiſtles, after that he hath diſcuſſed ſome main points of doctrine or diſcipline, (which occaſion required that he ſhould clear and ſettle,) to propoſe ſeveral good advices and rules, in the obſervance whereof the life of Chriſtian practice doth conſiſt. So that he thereby hath furniſhed us with ſo rich a variety of moral and ſpiritual precepts, concerning ſpecial matters, ſubordinate to the general laws of piety and virtue; that out of them might well be compiled a body of ethics, or ſyſtem of precepts *de officiis*, in truth and in completeneſs far excelling thoſe which any philoſophy hath been able to deviſe, or deliver. Theſe he rangeth not in any formal method, nor linketh together with ſtrict connection, but freely ſcattereth them, ſo as from his mind (as out of a fertile ſoil, impregnated with all ſeeds of wiſdom and goodneſs) they did haply ſpring up, or as they were ſuggeſted by that holy Spirit which continually guided and governed him.

Among

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SERM. XIV. Among divers ſuch delivered here, this is one, which ſhall be the ſubject of my preſent diſcourſe; the which, having no other plain coherence (except by affinity of matter) with the reſt incloſing it, I ſhall conſider abſolutely by itſelf, endeavouring ſomewhat to explain it, and to urge its practice.

Pray without ceaſing. For underſtanding theſe words, let us firſt conſider what is meant by the act enjoined, *praying*; then, what the qualification or circumſtance adjoined, *without ceaſing*, doth import.

1. The word *prayer* doth, in its uſual latitude of acception, comprehend all ſorts of devotion, or all that part of religious practice, wherein we do immediately addreſs ourſelves to God, having by ſpeech (oral or mental) a kind of intercourſe and converſation with him. So it includeth that praiſe which we ſhould yield to God, implying our due eſteem of his moſt excellent perfections, moſt glorious works, moſt juſt and wiſe diſpenſations of providence and grace; that thankſgiving whereby we ſhould expreſs an affectionate reſentment of our obligation to him for the numberleſs great benefits we receive from him; that acknowledgment of our entire dependence upon him, or our total ſubjection to his power and pleaſure; together with that profeſſion of faith in him, and avowing of ſervice to him, which we do owe as his natural creatures and ſubjects; that humble confeſſion of our infirmity, our vileneſs, our guilt, our miſery, (joined with deprecation of wrath and vengeance,) which is due from us as wretched men, and grievous ſinners; that petition of things needful or convenient for us, (of ſupply in our wants, of ſuccour and comfort in our diſtreſſes, of direction and aſſiſtance in our undertakings, of mercy and pardon for our offences,) which our natural ſtate (our poor, weak, ſad, and ſinful ſtate) doth engage us to ſeek; that interceſſion for others, which general charity or ſpecial relation do require from us, as concerned or obliged to deſire and promote their good.

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All these religious performances prayer, in its larger notion, doth comprise; according whereto in common use the whole body of divine service, containing all such acts, is termed *prayer*; and temples, consecrated to the performance of all holy duties, are styled *houses of prayer*; and that brief directory, or pregnant form of all devotion, which our Lord dictated, is called *his prayer*: and in numberless places of Scripture it is so taken.

In a stricter sense, it doth only signify one particular act among those, the petition of things needful or useful for us.

But according to the former more comprehensive meaning, I choose to understand it here; both because it is most commonly so used, (then, especially, when no distinctive limitation is annexed, or the nature of the subject matter doth not restrain it,) and because general reasons do equally oblige to performance of all these duties in the manner here prescribed: nor is there any ground to exclude any part of devotion from continual use; we being obliged no less incessantly to praise God for his excellencies, and thank him for his benefits, to avow his sovereign majesty and authority, to confess our infirmities and miscarriages, than to beg help and mercy from God. All devotion therefore, all sorts of proper and due address to God, (that πᾶσα προσευχὴ, *all prayer and supplication*, which St. Paul otherwhere speaketh of) are here enjoined, according to the manner adjoined, *without ceasing*, ἀδιαλείπτως, that is, indefinently, or continually. Eph. vi. 18.

2. For the meaning of which expression, we must suppose, that it must not be understood as if we were obliged in every instant or singular point of time actually to apply our minds to this practice; for to do thus is in itself impossible, and therefore can be no matter of duty; it is inconsistent with other duties, and therefore must not be practised; yea, will not consist with itself; for, that we may pray,

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pray, we must live; that we may live, we must eat; that we may eat, we must work; and must therefore attend other matters: so that actual devotion neither must nor can swallow up all our time and care. The deliberate operations of our mind are sometimes interrupted by sleep, sometimes will be taken up in satisfying our natural appetites, sometimes must be spent in attendance upon other reasonable employments, commanded or allowed by God; whence there can be no obligation to this practice according to that unlimited interpretation. This precept therefore (as divers others of a like general purport and expression) must be understood not in a natural, but moral sense, according as the exigence of things permitteth, or as the reason of the case requireth; so far as it is conveniently practicable, or as it is reasonably compatible with other duties and needs. But we must not so restrain it as to wrong it, by pinching it within too narrow bounds. How then it may be understood, and how far it should extend, we shall endeavour to declare by propounding divers senses whereof it is capable, grounded upon plain testimonies of Scripture, and enforcible by good reason; according to which senses we shall together press the observance thereof.

Adoro Scripturæ plenitudinem. *Tert.*

I. First then, *praying incessantly* may import the maintaining in our souls a ready disposition or habitual inclination to devotion; that which in Scripture is termed *the spirit of supplication*. This in moral esteem, and according to current language, derived thence, amounteth to a continual practice; a man being reckoned and said to do that, to which he is ever prompt and propense: as it is said of the righteous man, that *he is ever merciful, and lendeth*, because he is constantly disposed to supply his neighbour with needful relief; although he doth not ever actually dispense alms, or furnish his neighbour with supplies for his necessity. The words may signify this; they do at least by consequence imply so much:

Zech. xii. 10.

Ps. xxxvii. 26.

Ut quamvis tacet Hermogenes, cantor tamen æque est, &c. *Hor.*

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much: for if we do not in this, we can hardly perform the duty in any ſenſe; without a good temper fitting, and a good appetite prompting to devotion, we ſcarce can or will ever apply ourſelves thereto. If there be not in our heart a root of devotion, whence ſhould it ſpring? how can it live or thrive? If the organs of prayer are out of kelter, or out of tune, how can we pray? If we be not *accincti*, have not *the loins of our mind girt*, and *our feet ſhod in preparation* to the ſervice, when ſhall we ſet forward thereto? *My heart*, ſaid David, *is fixed, I will ſing and give praiſe: fixed*, that is, readily prepared, and ſteadily inclined to devotion. So ſhould ours conſtantly be. As a true friend is ever ready to entertain his friend with a frank courteſy and complacency; as he ever is apt upon occaſion for advice and aſſiſtance to have recourſe to him: ſo ſhould we be always diſpoſed cheerfully and decently to converſe with God, when he freely cometh to us, or we have need to apply ourſelves to him. If there be (from ſtupidity of mind, from coldneſs of affection, from ſluggiſhneſs of ſpirit, from worldly diſtraction) any indiſpoſition or averſeneſs thereto, we ſhould, by ſerious conſideration and induſtrious care, labour to remove them; rouſing our ſpirits, and kindling in our affections ſome fervency of deſire toward ſpiritual things: otherwiſe we ſhall be apt to ſhun, or to ſlip the opportunities inviting to devotion; our hearts will be ſo reſty, or liſtleſs, that hardly we ſhall be induced to perform it, when it is moſt neceſſary or uſeful for us.

SERM. XIV.

1 Pet. i. 13. Luke xii. 35. Eph. vi. 14. Pſ. cviii. 1. (2 Chron. xxx. 19. Ezr. vii. 10.)

II. *Praying inceſſantly* may denote a vigilant attendance (with earneſt regard, and firm purpoſe) employed upon devotion; ſuch attendance as men uſually beſtow on their affairs, whereof although the actual proſecution ſometime doth ſtick, yet the deſign continually proceedeth; the mind ever ſo directing its eye toward them, as quickly to eſpy, and readily to ſnatch any advantages of promoting them.

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SERM. XIV. This is a kind of continuance in practice, and is commonly so termed: as we say, that such an one is building a house, is writing a book, is occupying such land, although he be at present sleeping, or eating, or following any other business; because his main design never sleepeth, and his purpose continues uninterrupted. This is that which is so often enjoined under the phrase of *watching* about prayer. Luke xxi. 36. *Watch ye therefore, and pray always*, saith our Lord. Col. iv. 2. *Continue in prayer, and watch in the same*, saith St. Paul. Eph. vi. 18. *Be ye sober, and watch unto prayer*, saith St. Peter. 1 Pet. iv. 7. Which expressions import a most constant and careful attendance upon this duty: that we do not make it a παέργον, or bye-business in our life, (a matter of small consideration or indifference, of curiosity, of chance,) to be transacted drowsily or faintly, with a desultorious and slight endeavour, by fits, as the humour taketh us; but that, accounting it a business of the choicest nature and weightiest moment, we do adhere thereto with unmoveable purpose, regard it with undistracted attention, pursue it with unwearied diligence, being always upon the guard, wakeful and expedite, intent upon and apt to close with any occasion suggesting matter thereof. That we should do thus reason also doth oblige: for that, as in truth, no business doth better deserve our utmost resolution and care; so none doth more need them; nature being so backward, and occasion so slippery, that if we do not ever mind it, we shall seldom practise it.

Matt. xxiv. 42. xxv. 13.

2 Pet. i. 12. ἀεὶ ὑπομιμνήσκειν. Gal. iv. 18. πάντοτε ζηλοῦσθαι.

III. *Praying incessantly* may signify, that we do actually embrace all fit seasons and emergent occasions of devotion. This in moral computation doth pass for continual performance; as a tree is said to bear that fruit, which it produceth in season; and a man is accounted to work in that trade, which he exerciseth whenever he is called thereto. This sense is in several precepts parallel to that in hand plainly expressed. Eph. vi. 18. *Pray*, saith St. Paul, *with all prayer and supplication*

ſupplication, ἐν παντὶ καιρῷ· and, *Watch*, ſaith ours SERM.
Lord, ἐν παντὶ καιρῷ δεόμενοι, *praying in every ſeaſon*, or XIV.
upon every opportunity. Devotion, indeed, is rarely
unſeaſonable, or impertinent: we may offer it εὐκαί- Luke xxi.
ρως, ἀκαίρως, *in ſeaſon, and out of ſeaſon*; that is, not 36.
only taking opportunities preſented for it, or ur- 2 Tim. iv.
gently requiring it, but catching at them, and creating them to ourſelves, when there is no ſuch apparent and preſſing need of it. But there are ſome ſpecial occaſions, which more importunately and indiſpenſably do exact it: ſome ſeaſons there are, (either miniſtered by extrinſical accidents, or ſpringing from internal diſpoſitions) when, without both great blame and much damage to ourſelves, we cannot neglect it: times there be moſt proper and acceptable, when we do eſpecially need to pray, and when we are likely to ſpeed well therein. *Every one*, ſaith Pſal. xxxii. 6. lxix. 13. the Pſalmiſt, *that is godly will pray unto thee in a time* 2 Cor. vi. 2. *when thou mayeſt be found:* and, *My prayer*, ſaith he Iſa. xlix. 8. again, *is unto thee in an acceptable time.*

Thus, when we have received any ſingular bleſſing or notable favour from God, when proſperous ſucceſs hath attended our honeſt enterpriſes, when we have been happily reſcued from imminent dangers, when we have been ſupported in difficulties, or relieved in wants and ſtraits; then is it ſeaſonable to render ſacrifices of thankſgiving and praiſe to the God of victory, help, and mercy; to admire and celebrate him, who is our *ſtrength, and* our *deliverer*, Pſal. xviii. our *faithful refuge in trouble*, our *fortreſs, and the rock* 1, 2. lxxi. 3, &c. *of* our *ſalvation.* To omit this piece of devotion then is vile ingratitude, or ſtupid negligence and ſloth.

When any rare object or remarkable occurrence doth, upon this theatre of the world, preſent itſelf to our view, in ſurveying the glorious works of nature, or the ſtrange events of Providence; then is a proper occaſion ſuggeſted to ſend up hymns of praiſe to

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SERM. XIV. the power, the wisdom, the goodness of the world's great Creator and Governor.

When we undertake any business of special moment and difficulty, then it is expedient (wisdom prompting it) to sue for God's aid, to commit our affairs into his hand, to recommend our endeavours to the blessing of him, by whose guidance all things are ordered, without whose concourse nothing can be effected, upon whose arbitrary disposal all success dependeth.

Δεῖ πάσης πράξεως προηγεῖσθαι προσευχήν. *Marc. Erem.*

The beginning of any design or business (although ordinary, if considerable) is a proper season of prayer unto him, to whose bounty and favour we owe our ability to act, support in our proceedings, any comfortable issue of what we do: (for *all our sufficiency is of him: without him we can do nothing.*) Whence we can never apply ourselves to any business or work, not go to eat, to sleep, to travel, to trade, to study, with any true content, any reasonable security, any satisfactory hope, if we do not first humbly implore the favourable protection, guidance, and assistance of God.

2 Cor. iii. 5. John xv. 5.

When we do fall into doubts, or darknesses, (in the course either of our spiritual or secular affairs,) not knowing what course to steer, or which way to turn ourselves; (a case which to so blind and silly creatures, as we are, must often happen;) then doth the time bid us to consult the great Oracle of truth, *the mighty Counsellor, the Father of lights*, seeking resolution and satisfaction, light and wisdom from him; saying with the Psalmist, *Shew me thy ways, O Lord, lead me in thy truth, and teach me; for thou art the God of my salvation: Order my steps in thy word, and let not any iniquity have dominion over me*; following the advice of St. James, *If any man lack wisdom, let him ask of God, that giveth to all men liberally, and upbraideth not; and it shall be given him.*

Jer. x. 23. Prov. xx. 24. xvi. 9. Isa. ix. 6. Jam. i. 17. Psal. xxv. 4, 5, 8. xxvii. 11. lxxxvi. 11. cxliii. 10. xxxii. 8. cxix. 125. 133. Jam. i. 5. Prov. ii. 6.

When any storm of danger blustereth about us, perilously threatening, or furiously assailing us with mischief,

Isa. xxx. 1. Psal. lvi. 3. xxxiv. 4. xviii. 3.

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miſchief, (ſo that hardly by our own ſtrength or wits we can hope to evade) then with the wings of ardent devotion we ſhould fly unto God for ſhelter and for relief.

When any anxious care diſtracteth, or any heavy burthen preſſeth our minds, we ſhould by prayer eaſe ourſelves of them, and diſcharge them upon God, committing the matter of them to his care and providence; according to that direction of St. Paul, *Be careful for nothing: but in every thing by prayer and ſupplication with thankſgiving let your requeſts be made known to God.* Phil. iv. 6.

When we do lie under any irkſome trouble, or ſore diſtreſs, (of want, pain, diſgrace,) then, for ſuccour and ſupport, for eaſe and comfort, we ſhould have recourſe to *the Father of pities, and God of all conſolation*; who *is nigh to all that call upon him, will alſo hear their cry, and will ſave them*; who, when *the righteous cry, doth hear them, and delivereth them out of all their troubles*; who is ſo often ſtyled *the hiding-place from troubles, the help and ſtrength, the ſhield and buckler, the rock, the fortreſs, the high tower, the horn of ſalvation*, to all good and diſtreſſed people. To him we ſhould in ſuch a condition have recourſe, imitating the pious Pſalmiſt, whoſe practice was this: *In the day of my trouble I ſought the Lord: I poured out my complaint before him, I ſhewed before him my trouble: I called unto the Lord in my diſtreſs: the Lord anſwered me, and ſet me in a large place.* 2 Cor. i. 3. Pſal. cxlv. 18, 19. cxlvii. 3. xxxiv. 17. xviii. 1, 2. lvi. 3. lxxxiv. 9. xxxii. 7. xxxiii. 20. lxxi. 3. Pſal. lxxvii. 2. xviii. 6. cxlii. 2. cxviii. 5.

When any ſtrong temptation doth invade us, with which by our own ſtrength we cannot grapple, but are like to ſink and faulter under it; then is it opportune and needful that we ſhould ſeek to God for a ſupply of ſpiritual forces, and the ſuccour of his almighty grace, as St. Paul did: when *there was given to him a thorn in the fleſh, a meſſenger of Satan to buffet him*; then *he beſought the Lord thrice that it might depart from him:* and he had this return from God, *My grace is ſufficient for thee.* 2 Cor. xii. 7, 8, 9.

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SERM. XIV. When alſo (from ignorance, or miſtake, from inadvertency, negligence, or raſhneſs, from weakneſs, from wantonneſs, from preſumption) we have tranſgreſſed our duty, and incurred ſinful guilt; then, (for avoiding the conſequent danger and vengeance, for unloading our conſciences of the burthen and diſcomfort thereof,) with humble confeſſion in our mouths, and ſerious contrition in our hearts, we ſhould apply ourſelves to the God of mercy, deprecating his wrath, and imploring pardon from him; remembering that promiſe of St. John, *If we confeſs our ſins, he is faithful and juſt to forgive us our ſins, and to cleanſe us from all iniquity*; and that declaration of the Wiſe Man, *He that covereth his ſins ſhall not proſper: but he that confeſſeth and forſaketh them ſhall have mercy.*

1 John i. 9. Prov. xxviii. 13. Pſal. xxxii. 5. li. 1. &c. Job vii. 20.

In theſe and the like caſes God by our neceſſities doth invite and ſummon us to come unto him; and no leſs fooliſh than impious we are, if we do then ſlink away, or fly from him. Then we ſhould (as the Apoſtle to the Hebrews exhorteth) *come boldly unto the throne of grace, that we may obtain mercy, and find grace to help in time of need*, (or, * for ſeaſonable relief.)

Heb. iv. 16. * εἰς εὔκαιρον βοήθειαν.

And beſide thoſe outwardly prompting and urging us, there be other opportunities, ſpringing from within us, which we are no leſs obliged and concerned to embrace. When God by his gentle whiſpers calleth us, or by his ſoft impulſes draweth us into his preſence; we ſhould then take heed of ſtopping our ears, or turning our hearts from him, refuſing to hearken, or to comply. We muſt not any wiſe quench or damp any ſparks of devout affection kindled in us by the divine Spirit; we muſt not repel or reſiſt any of his kindly ſuggeſtions or motions.

Jer. xxxv. 15. Prov. i. 24. Iſa. l 2. lxv. 12. lxvi. 4.

Whenever we find ourſelves well affected to, or well framed for devotion; that we have a lively ſenſe of, and a coming appetite to ſpiritual things; that our ſpirits are briſk and pure, our fancy calm and clear, our

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our hearts tender and ſupple, our affections warm and nimble; then a fair ſeaſon offereth itſelf; and when the iron is ſo hot, we ſhould ſtrike. SERM. XIV.

If at any time we feel any forward inclinations or good diſpoſitions to the practice of this duty, we ſhould never check or curb them, but rather ſhould promote and advance them; puſhing ourſelves forward in this hopeful career; letting out the ſtream of our affections into this right channel, that it may run freely therein, that it may overflow and diffuſe itſelf in exuberance of devotion. Farther,

IV. *Praying inceſſantly* may ſignify, that we ſhould with aſſiduous urgency drive on the intent of our prayers, never quitting it, or deſiſting, till our requeſts are granted, or our deſires are accompliſhed. Thus doing we may be ſaid to pray continually: as he that goeth forward in his journey, (although he ſometime doth bait, ſometime doth reſt and repoſe himſelf,) is ſaid yet to be in travel; or as he that doth not wave the proſecution of his cauſe, (although ſome demurs intervene) is deemed ſtill to be in ſuit. This is that which our Lord did in the Goſpel preſcribe and perſuade, where it is recorded of him, that *He ſpake a parable unto them, that men ought always to pray, and not to faint.* That *praying always* the enſuing diſcourſe ſheweth to import reſtleſs importunity, and perſeverance in prayer: the ſame which ſo often is commended to us by the phraſes of μὴ ἐκκακεῖν, *not to faint* or *faulter*; μὴ παύεσθαι, *not to ceaſe*, or give over; προσκαρτερεῖν, *to continue inſtant*, or hold out ſtoutly; ἀγωνίζεσθαι, *to ſtrive earneſtly*, or conteſt and ſtruggle *in prayers*; προσμένειν ταῖς δεήσεσι, *to abide at ſupplications*; ἀγρυπνεῖν ἐν πάσῃ προσκαρτερήσει, *to watch with all perſeverance.* That which alſo is implied by thoſe terms, which in ſcriptural ſtyle do commonly expreſs devotion: by *ſeeking God:* which implieth, that God doth not preſently, upon any ſlight addreſs, diſcover himſelf in beneficial effects anſwerable to our deſires, but after a careful and painful continuance in our applications

Luke xviii. 1. Col. i. 9. Eph. i. 16. Ro. xii. 12. Col. iv. 2, 12. 1 Tim. v. 5. Eph. vi. 18. Pſal. x. 4. ix. 10. xiv. 2. xxiv. 6. lxiii. 1. lxix. 6, 32. lxx. 4. lxxxiii. 16. Job viii. 5. Deut. iv. 29. Prov. viii. 17. Pſ. lxxvii. 6.

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SERM. XIV.

to him; by **waiting upon God*; which signifieth, that if God do not presently appear, granting our requests, we should patiently stay, expecting till he be pleased to do it in his own best time, according to that in the Psalm, †*Our eyes wait upon the Lord our God, until he have mercy upon us:* by *knocking*; which intimateth, that the door of grace doth not ever stand open, or that we can have an effectual access to God, until he, warned, and as it were excited, by our earnest importunity, pleaseth to listen, to disclose himself, to come forth unto us.

* Ps. cxxiii. 2. lxix. 3. cxxx. 5. xxxvii. 7. xxv. 5. 21. xxvii. 14. xxxvii. 34. lii. 9. lix. 9. cxlv. 15. Isa. viii. 17. xl. 31. xlix. 23. Hos. xii. 6. Lam. iii. 25, 26. Prov. xx. 22.

† Ps. cxxiii. 2. Luke xii. 36. Matt. vii. 7.

And this practice reason also doth enforce. For there are some good things absolutely necessary for our spiritual life and welfare, (such as are freedom from bad inclinations, disorderly affections, vicious habits, and noxious errors; the sanctifying presence and influence of God's holy Spirit, with the blessed graces and sweet fruits thereof; growth in virtue, delight in spiritual things, the sense of God's love and favour, with the like,) which good reason engageth us so perseveringly to seek, as never to rest or be satisfied till we have acquired them in perfect degree; since we cannot ever do well without them, or ever get enough of them. In begging other inferior things, it may become us to be reserved, indifferent, and modest; but about these matters (wherein all our felicity is extremely concerned) it were a folly to be slack or timorous; as we cannot be said immoderately to desire them, so we cannot be supposed immodestly to seek them there, where only they can be found, in God's presence and hand. The case doth bear, yea, doth require, that we should be eager and hot, resolute and stiff, free and bold, yea, in a manner peremptory and impudent solicitors with God for them. So our Saviour intimateth, where, comparing the manner of God's proceeding with that of men, he representeth one friend yielding needful succour to another, not barely upon the score of friendship, but διὰ τὴν ἀναίδειαν, *for his impu-*

Vid. Chrys. tom. vi. Orat. viii. ad Theod. 2.

Αἰδὼς ἐν ἀγαθῇ κεχρημένη ἐν δέῃ προέκτης.

Luke xi. 8.

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SERM. XIV.

impudence; that is, for his confident and continued urgency, admitting no refusal or excuse. So doth God, in such cases, allow and oblige us to deal with him, being instant and pertinacious in our requests, *giving him no rest*, (as the phrase is in the Prophet;) not enduring to be put off, or brooking any repulse: never being discouraged, or cast into despair, by any delay or semblance of neglect. We may *wrestle with God*, like Jacob, and with Jacob may say, *I will not let thee go, except thou bless me.* Thus God suffereth himself to be prevailed upon, and is willingly overcome: thus Omnipotence may be mastered, and a happy victory may be gained over Invincibility itself. Heaven sometime may be forced by storm, (or by the assaults of extremely fervent prayer;) it assuredly will yield to a long siege. God will not ever hold out against the attempts of an obstinate suppliant. So *the kingdom of heaven suffereth violence, and the violent take it by force.* We read in St. John's Gospel of a man, that, being thirty-eight years diseased, did wait at the pool of Bethesda seeking relief: him our Lord pitied and helped, crowning his patience with miraculous relief, and proposing it for an example to us of perseverance. It is said of the Patriarch Isaac, that *he intreated the Lord for his wife, because she was barren; and the Lord was intreated of him, and Rebecca his wife conceived.* Whereupon St. Chrysostom doth observe, that he had persevered twenty years in that petition.

Isa. lxii. 7. Gen. xxxii. 26. Matt. xi. 12. John v. 5. Vid. Chryf. tom. v. Orat. 40. and in Joh. Or. 36. Gen. xxv. 21. Vid. tom. v. Orat. 68.

Of good success to this practice we have many assurances in holy Scripture. *The Lord is good unto them that wait for him, to the soul that seeketh him. Blessed are all they that wait for him. None that wait on him shall be ashamed. *They that wait upon the Lord shall renew their strength; they shall mount up with wings as eagles; they shall run, and not be weary; they shall walk, and not faint.* So hath God assured

Lam. iii. 25. Isa. xxx. 18. xlix. 23. Ps. xxv. 3. xxxvii. 9. * Isa. xl. 31. 1 Chron. xxviii. 9.

Ezr. viii. 22. Amos v. 4. 2 Chr. xv. 12. Ps. ix. 10. *Seeking God*, the periphrasis of a religious man. Ps. xiv. 2, xxiv. 6. lxix. 6. lxx. 4. cxix. 2. x. 4.

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SERM. XIV. by his word, and engaged himſelf by promiſe, that he will yield unto conſtant and patient devotion; ſo that it ſhall never want good ſucceſs.

Without this practice we cannot indeed hope to obtain thoſe precious things; they will not come at an eaſy rate, or be given for a ſong; a lazy wiſh or two cannot fetch them down from heaven. God will not beſtow them at firſt aſking, or deal them out in one lump: but it is upon aſſiduous ſoliciting, and by gradual communication, that he diſpenſeth them. So his wiſe good-will, for many ſpecial reaſons, diſpoſeth him to proceed: that we may (as it becometh and behoveth us) abide under a continual ſenſe of our natural impotency and penury; of our dependence upon God, and obligation to him for the free collation of thoſe beſt gifts: that by ſome difficulty of procuring them we may be minded of their worth, and induced the more to prize them: that by earneſtly ſeeking them we may improve our ſpiritual appetites, and excite holy affections: that by much converſing with heaven our minds may be raiſed above earthly things, and our hearts purified from ſordid deſires: that we may have a conſtant employment anſwerable to the beſt capacities of our ſouls, worthy our care and pain, yielding moſt ſolid profit and pure delight unto us: that, in fine, by our greater endeavour in religious practice we may obtain a more ample reward thereof.

For the ſame reaſon indeed that we pray at all, we ſhould pray thus with continued inſtance. We do not pray to inſtruct or adviſe God; not to tell
Matt. vi. 8. him news, or inform him of our wants: (*He knows them*, as our Saviour telleth us, *before we aſk:*) nor do we pray by dint of argument to perſuade God, and bring him to our bent; nor that by fair ſpeech we may cajole him or move his affections toward us by pathetical orations: not for any ſuch purpoſe are we obliged to pray. But for that it becometh and behoveth us ſo to do, becauſe it is a proper inſtrument

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ment of bettering, ennobling, and perfecting our souls; becauſe it breedeth moſt holy affections, and pure ſatisfactions, and worthy reſolutions; becauſe it fitteth us for the enjoyment of happineſs, and leadeth us thither: for ſuch ends devotion is preſcribed; and conſtant perſeverance therein being needful to thoſe purpoſes, (praying by fits and ſtarts not ſufficing to accompliſh them,) therefore ſuch perſeverance is required of us. Farther, SERM. XIV.

V. *Praying inceſſantly* may import, that we do with all our occupations and all occurrences interlace devout ejaculations of prayer and praiſe; lifting up our hearts to God, and breathing forth expreſſions of devotion ſuitable to the objects and occaſions which preſent themſelves. This as it nearly doth approach to the punctual accompliſhment of what our text preſcribeth, ſo it ſeemeth required by St. Paul, when he biddeth us *pray always* ἐν πνεύματι, *in ſpirit*, and to ſing ἐν τῇ καρδίᾳ, *in the heart*: that is, with very frequent elevations of ſpirit in holy thoughts and deſires toward heaven; with opportune reſentments of heart, directing thanks and praiſe to God. We cannot ever be framing or venting long prayers with our lips, but almoſt ever our mind can throw pious glances, our heart may dart good wiſhes upwards; ſo that hardly any moment (any conſiderable ſpace of time) ſhall paſs without ſome lightſome flaſhes of devotion[a]. As bodily reſpiration, without intermiſſion or impediment, doth concur with all our actions; ſo may that breathing of ſoul, which preſerveth our ſpiritual life, and ventilateth that holy flame within us, well conſpire with all other occupations[b]. Eph. vi. 18. v. 19. Col. iii. 16.

[a] Sed non ſatis perſpiciunt quantum natura humani ingenii valeat, quæ ita eſt agilis et velox, ſic in omnem partem (ut ita dixerim) ſpectat, ut ne poſſit quidem aliquid agere tantum unum; in plura vero non eodem die modo, ſed eodem temporis momento, vim ſuam impendat. *Quint.* i. 12.

[b] Μηδενὸς γὰρ θεῷ μᾶλλον ἢ ἀναπνευστέον· ᾧ εἰ οἷόν τε τοῦτο εἰπεῖν, μηδὲ ἄλλο τι ἢ τοῦτο πρακτέον. *Naz. Or.* 33.

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For devotion is of a nature ſo ſpiritual, ſo ſubtile, and penetrant, that no matter can exclude or obſtruct it. Our minds are ſo exceedingly nimble and active, that no buſineſs can hold pace with them, or exhauſt their attention and activity. We can never be ſo fully poſſeſſed by any employment, but that divers vacuities of time do intercur, wherein our thoughts and affections will be diverted to other matters. As a covetous man, whatever beſide he is doing, will be carking about his bags and treaſures; an ambitious man will be deviſing on his plots and projects; a voluptuous man will have his mind in his diſhes; a laſcivious man will be doting on his amours; a ſtudious man will be muſing on his notions; every man, according to his particular inclination, will lard his buſineſs, and beſprinkle all his actions with cares and wiſhes tending to the enjoyment of what he moſt eſteemeth and affecteth: ſo may a good Chriſtian, through all his undertakings, wind in devout reflections and pious motions of ſoul toward the chief object of his mind and affection. Moſt buſineſſes have wide gaps, all have ſome chinks, at which devotion may ſlip in. Be we never ſo urgently ſet or cloſely intent upon any work, (be we feeding, be we travelling, be we trading, be we ſtudying,) nothing yet can forbid, but that we may together wedge in a thought concerning God's goodneſs, and bolt forth a word of praiſe for it; but that we may reflect on our ſins, and ſpend a penitential ſigh on them; but that we may deſcry our need of God's help, and diſpatch a brief petition for it: a *God be praiſed*, a *Lord have mercy*, a *God bleſs*, or *God help me*, will nowiſe interrupt or diſturb our proceedings [c]. As worldly cares and deſires do often intrude and creep into our devotions, diſtracting and defiling them; ſo may ſpiritual thoughts and holy affections

Vid. Chryſ. Orat. v. in Annam, tom. v. p. 78, 79.

[c] Εἰπὲ κατὰ διάνοιαν, Ἐλέησόν με, ὁ Θεὸς, καὶ ἁπήρτισαί σου ἡ ψυχή. *Chryſ.* ibid.

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inſinuate themſelves into and hallow our ſecular tranſactions. This practice is very poſſible, and it is no leſs expedient: for that if our employments be not thus ſeaſoned, they can have no true life or ſavour in them; they will in themſelves be dead and putrid, they will be foul and noiſome, or at leaſt flat and inſipid unto us.

There are ſome other good meanings of this precept, according to which holy Scripture (backed with good reaſon) obligeth us to obſerve it: but thoſe, (together with the general inducements to the practice of this duty) that I may not farther now treſpaſs on your patience, I ſhall reſerve to another opportunity.

SERMON

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SERMON XV.

Of the Duty of Prayer.

1 THESS. v. 17.

Pray without ceaſing.

WHAT the *prayer* here enjoined by St. Paul doth import, and how by it univerſally all ſorts of devotion ſhould be underſtood, we did formerly diſcourſe. How alſo according to divers ſenſes (grounded in holy Scripture, and enforced by good reaſon,) we may perform this duty *inceſſantly*, we did then declare; five ſuch ſenſes we did mention and proſecute: I ſhall now add two or three more, and preſs them. SERM. XV.

VI. *Praying* then *inceſſantly* may imply, that we do appoint certain times conveniently diſtant for the practice of devotion, and carefully obſerve them. To keep the Jews in a conſtant exerciſe of divine worſhip, God did conſtitute a ſacrifice, which was called *Tamidh*, (ἡ διαπαντὸς θυσία) *the continual ſacrifice*. And as that ſacrifice, being conſtantly offered at ſet times, was thence denominated *continual*; ſo may we, by punctually obſerving fit returns of devotion, be ſaid to pray *inceſſantly*. Dan. viii. 11. Heb. xiii. 5. Neh. x. 33.

And great reaſon there is that we ſhould do ſo. For we know that all perſons, who would not lead a looſe and flattering life, but deſign with good aſſurance and

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SERM. XV. and advantage to prosecute an orderly course of action, are wont to distribute their time into several parcels; assigning some part thereof to the necessary refection of their bodies, some to the convenient relaxation of their minds, some to the dispatch of their ordinary affairs, some also to familiar conversation, and interchanging good offices with their friends[d]; considering, that otherwise they shall be uncertain, and *unstable in all their ways.* And in this distribution of time devotion surely should not lack its share: it rather justly claimeth the choicest portion to be allotted thereto, as being incomparably the noblest part of our duty, and maineſt concernment of our lives. The feeding our souls and nourishing our spiritual life, the refreshing our spirits with those no less pleasant than wholesome exercises, the driving on our correspondence and commerce with heaven, the improving our friendship and interest with God, are affairs which above all others do best deserve, and most need being secured. They must not therefore be left at random, to be done by the by, as it hitteth by chance, or as the fancy taketh us. If we do not depute vacant seasons, and fix periodical returns for devotion, engaging ourselves by firm resolution, and inuring our minds by constant usage to the strict observance of them, secluding from them, as from sacred enclosures, all other businesses; we shall often be dangerously tempted to neglect it, we shall be commonly listless to it, prone to defer it, easily seduced from it by the encroachment of other affairs, or enticement of other pleasures. It is requisite that our souls also (no less than our bodies) should have their meals, settled at such intervals as the maintenance of their life, their health, their strength and vigour do require; that they may not perish or

[d] Cur ipsi aliquid forensibus negotiis, aliquid desideriis amicorum, aliquid rationibus domesticis, aliquid curæ corporis, nonnihil voluptati quotidie damus? *Quint.* i. 12.

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languiſh for want of timely repaſts; that a good appetite may duly ſpring up, prompting and inſtigating to them; that a ſound temper and robuſt conſtitution of ſoul may be preſerved by them. SERM. XV.

Prayers are the bulwarks of piety and good conſcience, the which ought to be placed ſo as to flank and relieve one another, together with the interjacent ſpaces of our life; that the enemy (*the ſin which doth ſo eaſily beſet us*) may not come on between, or at any time aſſault us, without a force ſufficiently near to reach and repel him. Heb. xii. 1.

In determining theſe ſeaſons and meaſures of time according to juſt proportion, honeſt prudence (weighing the ſeveral conditions, capacities, and circumſtances of each perſon) muſt arbitrate. For ſome difference is to be made between a merchant and a monk, between thoſe who follow a court and thoſe who reſide in a cloiſter or a college. Some men having great encumbrances of buſineſs and duty by neceſſity impoſed on them, which conſume much of their time, and engage their thoughts; of them in reaſon, neither ſo frequent recourſes to, nor ſo long continuance in prayer can be demanded, as from thoſe who enjoy more abundant leiſure, and free ſcope of thoughts. But ſome fit times all may and muſt allow, which no avocation of buſineſs, no diſtraction of care ſhould purloin from them.

Certain ſeaſons and periods of this kind nature itſelf (in correſpondence to her unalterable revolutions) doth ſeem to define and preſcribe: thoſe which the royal Prophet recommendeth, when he ſaith, *It is a good thing to give thanks unto the Lord, and to ſing praiſes unto thy name, O thou moſt high: To ſhew forth thy loving-kindneſs every morning, and thy faithfulneſs every night.* Every day we do recover and receive a new life from God; every morning we do commence buſineſs, or revive it: from our bed of reſt and ſecurity we then iſſue forth, expoſing ourſelves to the cares and toils, to the dangers, troubles, and temptations Pſal. xcii. 1, 2. lv. 17.

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temptations of the world; then especially therefore it is reasonable, that we should sacrifice thanks to the gracious preserver of our life, and the faithful restorer of its supports and comforts; that we should crave his direction and help in the pursuit of our honest undertakings; that to his protection from sin and mischief we should recommend ourselves and our affairs; that, by offering up to him the first-fruits of our diurnal labours, we should consecrate and consign them all to his blessing; that as we are then wont to salute all the world, so then chiefly with humble obeisance we should accost him, who is ever present with us, and continually watchful over us. Then also peculiarly devotion is most seasonable, because then our minds being less prepossessed and pestered with other cares, our fancies becoming lively and gay, our memories fresh and prompt, our spirits copious and brisk, we are better disposed for it.

Every night also reason calleth for these duties; requiring that we should close our business and wind up all our cares in devotion; that we should then bless God for his gracious preservation of us from the manifold hazards and the sins to which we stood obnoxious; that we should implore his mercy for the manifold neglects and transgressions of our duty, which through the day past we have incurred; that our minds being then so tired with study and care, our spirits so wasted with labour and toil, that we cannot any longer sustain ourselves, but do of our own accord sink down into a posture of death, we should, as dying men, resign our souls into God's hand, depositing ourselves and our concernments into his custody, who alone *doth never sleep nor slumber*; praying that he would guard us from all the dangers and disturbances incident to us in that state of forgetfulness, and *interregnum* of our reason; that he would grant us a happy resurrection in safety and health, with a good and cheerful mind, enabling us thereafter

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thereafter comfortably to enjoy ourſelves, and de- SERM. lightfully to ſerve him. XV.

Thus if we do conſtantly bound and circumſcribe our days, dedicating thoſe moſt remarkable breaks of time unto God's ſervice, ſince beginning and end do comprehend the whole, ſeeing, in the computation and ſtyle of Moſes, *evening and morning* do conſtitute a day; we may with ſome good congruity be ſaid to pray inceſſantly.

Eſpecially if at the middle diſtance between thoſe extremes we are wont to interpoſe ſomewhat of devotion. For as then uſually our ſpirits, being ſomewhat ſhattered and ſpent, do need a recruit, enabling us to paſs through the reſidue of the day with its incumbent buſineſs; ſo then it would do well, and may be requiſite, in a meal of devotion to refreſh our ſouls with ſpiritual ſuſtenance, drawn from the never-failing ſtorehouſe of divine grace; which may ſo fortify us, that with due vigour and alacrity we may perform the enſuing duties to God's honour, and our own comfort. Thus to practiſe was the reſolution of the Pſalmiſt, that great maſter of devotion; *Evening*, ſaid he, *and morning, and at noon will pray, and cry aloud.* And this was the cuſtom of the noble Daniel, from which no occaſion could divert, no hazard could deter him: *He kneeled*, ſaith the ſtory, *upon his knees three times a day, and prayed, and gave thanks before his God.* Pſal. lv. 17. Dan. vi. 10.

Theſe are times which it is neceſſary, or very expedient, that all men (even perſons of higheſt rank, and greateſt employment) ſhould obſerve. Theſe even of old were the practices of religious perſons, not expreſsly preſcribed by God's law, but aſſumed by themſelves; good reaſon ſuggeſting them to the firſt practiſers, and the conſenting example of pious men afterward enforcing them.

God indeed did himſelf in his Law, or by his Prophets, appoint public and ſolemn celebrations of worſhip to himſelf, in ſacrifices (involving prayer,

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SERM. XV. and accompanied therewith) constantly to be offered every morning and evening: religious princes also did institute services of thanksgiving and praise to be performed at those times: but there doth not appear any direct institution of private devotion, or its circumstances; but the practice thereof seemeth originally to have been purely voluntary, managed and measured according to the reason, by the choice of each person; yet so, that the practice of eminently good men leading, and others following, it grew into a kind of common law, or standing rule, (seeming to carry an obligation with it,) to observe the times specified.

2 Chron. ii. 4. 1 Chron. xvi. 40, 41. xxiii. 30. Ezr. iii. 3.

Besides those three times, there were farther other middle times observed by devout people, who had leisure and disposition of mind thereto; once between morning and noon, and once between noon and evening were sequestered to that purpose: whence in the Acts the ninth hour of the day (that is, the middle interval between noon and evening) is called *the hour of prayer*. Yea, some did impose on themselves the observation of two other times, one between evening and midnight, the other between midnight and morn. To which practice those places in the Psalms do seem to allude; *My mouth shall praise thee with joyful lips, when I remember thee on my bed, and meditate on thee in the night-watches. I prevented the dawning of the morning, and cried: Mine eyes prevent the night-watches, that I may meditate on thy word.* And plainly the whole number of those times, which the Psalmist observed, is expressed in those words: *Seven times a day will I praise thee, because of thy righteous judgments.* Which examples whoever shall choose to follow, (in any measure) he shall do wisely and commendably; he shall certainly have no cause to repent; he will find it richly worth his while; great benefit and comfort will thence accrue unto him.

Acts iii. 1. Psal. lxiii. 5, 6. Psal. cxix. 147, 148. Psal cxix. 164.

If indeed Jews were so liberal in assigning, so punctual in affording such portions of time for yielding praise,

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praiſe, and offering ſupplications unto God; how much more free and ready, more careful and diligent, ſhould we be in this way of practice? we who have a religion ſo far more ſpiritual, and exempt from corporeal incumbrances; precepts ſo much more expreſs and clear; ſo much higher obligations and ſtronger encouragements to this duty; whom God in eſpecial manner ſo graciouſly doth invite, ſo powerfully doth attract unto himſelf? But farther, SERM. XV.

VII. More eſpecially this precept may be ſuppoſed to exact from us a compliance in carefully obſerving the times of devotion ordained by public authority, or ſettled by general cuſtom. This in a popular and legal ſenſe is doing a thing indefinitely, when we perform it ſo often as is required by law or cuſtom. So the Apoſtle to the Hebrews ſaith of *the prieſts*, that *they went always into the tabernacle, accompliſhing the ſervice of God: always*, that is, at all the ſolemn times appointed. And thus of the Apoſtles it is affirmed by St. Luke, that *they were continually in the temple, bleſſing and praiſing God*; that is, they conſtantly reſorted thither at the ſtated times of concourſe for prayer. This good reaſon alſo plainly doth injoin: for that the neglecting it is not only a diſorderly behaviour in a matter of high conſequence; a criminal diſregard and diſobedience to authority; a ſcandalous contempt of our neighbours, from whoſe laudable faſhion we diſcoſt; a wrongful deſerting the public, to whoſe good, mainly promoted by the public worſhip of God, we do owe the contribution of our endeavour; but a heinous affront to Almighty God, who thereby is plainly diſhonoured, and in a manner openly diſavowed; a huge prejudice to religion, the credit and power whereof, without viſible profeſſion, exemplary compliance, mutual conſent and encouragement, cannot be upheld. Were there times by law or cuſtom defined, (as in ſome places indeed there are,) when all men ſhould be required in perſon ſolemnly to attend on their

Levit. xix. 30. xxvi. 2. Ye ſhall keep my Sabbaths, and reverence my Sanctuary.

Heb. ix. 6.

Luke xxiv. 53.

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SERM. XV. prince, for profeſſing their allegiance, or deferring any homage to him; would not thoſe, who ſhould wilfully refuſe or decline appearance, be juſtly chargeable as guilty of diſhonouring and wronging him? would not ſuch their defailance paſs for ſufficient proof, that they do not acknowledge him, that at leaſt they do not much regard or value him? So, by not joining at ſtated times in celebration of divine worſhip, we may be well conceived wholly to diſclaim God, or greatly to diſeſteem him; to ſlight religion, as a thing inſignificant and unprofitable. Do we not indeed thereby more than intimate, that we little believe God to be our ſovereign Lord and Governor; that we ſtand in no great awe or dread of him; that we are not much ſenſible of his benefits and mercies; that we repoſe ſmall truſt or hope in him; that we do not take ourſelves much to want his protection, his guidance, his aſſiſtance, his favour and mercy? Are we not in effect like unto thoſe in Job, who *ſay unto God, Depart from us, for we deſire not the knowledge of thy ways? What is the Almighty, that we ſhould ſerve him? or what profit ſhall we have, if we pray unto him?* Thus the ſtanders-by commonly (ſome ſo as to be much offended at, others ſo as to be corrupted by our bad example) will interpret this neglect; and ſo aſſuredly God himſelf will take it from us, and accordingly deal with us. As he claimeth this public attendance on him for his due: *(Give*, proclaimeth he by the mouth of one of his great Heralds, *Give unto the Lord, O ye mighty, give unto the Lord glory and ſtrength: Give unto the Lord the glory due to his name: worſhip the Lord in the beauty of holineſs:)* ſo if we to his wrong and diſgrace refuſe to yield it, we ſhall certainly find anſwerable reſentment and recompence from him: that as we are careleſs to ſerve him, ſo he will be unmindful to bleſs us; as we are backward to avow and glorify him, ſo he will not be forward to own and grace us; as we do ſo *deny him before*

Job xxi. 14, 15.

Pſal. xxix. 1, 2. lxvi. 2.

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before men, ſo he will deny us before them alſo *. What other meaſure indeed can we imagine, or expect to receive? Will God, think we, be ſo partial and fond to us, ſo diſregardful and injurious toward himſelf, that he will vouchſafe to appear in favour to us, when we deign not to appear in reſpect to him? that he will openly tender our repute, when we apparently diſregard his honour? that he will employ his wiſdom, or exert his power, in our behalf, when we ſcarce will think a thought, or ſtir a ſtep, for his ſervice? Can we hope that he will freely diſpenſe proſperous ſucceſs to our enterpriſes, when we either care not or ſcorn to implore his help? that he will reach forth undeſerved bleſſings to us, when we ſubtract due praiſes from him? that he will any wiſe ſhew himſelf bountiful and merciful toward us, when we ſo palpably are injuſt and ingrateful toward him? No, *ſurely he ſcorneth the ſcorners*; and, *whoſoever deſpiſeth him, ſhall be lightly eſteemed:* ſo he expreſsly hath threatened; and ſeeing he is both infallibly true, and invincibly able, we may reaſonably preſume that he will accompliſh his word.

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* 2 Tim. ii. 12. Matt. x. 33. Luke ix. 26. xii. 9.

Prov. iii. 34. 1 Sam. ii. 30.

VIII. Laſtly, *Praying inceſſantly* may import at large a frequency in devotion. This the words at leaſt do exact or neceſſarily imply, however expounded. For doing *inceſſantly* cannot imply leſs than doing *frequently:* in no tolerable ſenſe can we be ſaid to do that continually, which we do ſeldom: but it is an ordinary ſcheme of ſpeech to ſay that a man doth that always, which he is wont to do, and performeth often. As of the pious ſoldier Cornelius it is ſaid, that he *gave much alms to the people, and prayed to God always*; and of Anna the propheteſs, that ſhe *departed not from the temple, but ſerved God with prayers and faſtings night and day*; that is, ſhe frequently reſorted to the temple, and ſerved God with an aſſiduous conſtancy. As the words may bear and do involve this ſenſe, ſo doth the reaſon of the caſe enforce it: for very juſt, very fit, very needful it is to

Acts x. 2.

Luke ii. 37.

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practiſe thus. There is ever at hand abundant reaſon for, and appoſite matter of, devotion; therefore no large ſpace of time ſhould paſs without it: there be perpetually depending many cauſes thereof; whence there is not to be allowed any long vacation from it. As every moment we from God's mercy and bounty partake great favours; ſo ſhould we often render thanks and praiſe for them; for perpetually to receive courteſies, and rarely to return acknowledgments, is notorious ingratitude and iniquity. We frequently (and in a manner continually) do fall into ſins; often therefore we are obliged to confeſs ſins, we are concerned to deprecate wrath, and beg mercy: otherwiſe we muſt long crouch under the ſore burden of guilt, the ſad dread of puniſhment, the bitter pangs of remorſe, or the deſperate hazard of ſtupid obduration. Whatever we deſign or undertake, toward the good management and happy ſucceſs thereof, we (being ignorant and impotent creatures) do need the guidance, the aſſiſtance, and the bleſſing of God; ſo often therefore it is requiſite that we ſhould be ſeeking and ſueing for them: if not, we do not only tranſgreſs our duties, but fondly neglect or foully betray our own concernments. The cauſes therefore of devotion being ſo conſtant, the effects in ſome correſpondence ſhould be frequent.

Such frequency is indeed neceſſary for the breeding, the nouriſhment, the growth and improvement of all piety. Devotion is that holy and heavenly fire, which darteth into our minds the light of ſpiritual knowledge, which kindleth in our hearts the warmth of holy deſires: if therefore we do continue long abſent from it, a night of darkneſs will overſpread our minds, a deadening coldneſs will ſeize upon our affections. It is the beſt food of our ſouls, which preſerveth their life and health, which repaireth their ſtrength and vigour, which rendereth them luſty and active: if we therefore long abſtain from it,

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it, we ſhall ſtarve, or pine away; we ſhall be faints and feeble in all religious performances; we ſhall have none at all, or a very languid and meagre piety. SERM. XV.

To maintain in us a conſtant and ſteady diſpoſition to obedience, to correct our perverſe inclinations, to curb our unruly paſſions, to ſtrengthen us againſt temptations, to comfort us in anxieties and diſtreſſes, we do need continual ſupplies of grace from God; the which ordinarily are communicated in devotion, as the channel which conveyeth, or the inſtrument which helpeth to procure it, or the condition upon which it is granted. Faith, hope, love, ſpiritual comfort, and joy, all divine graces are chiefly elicited, expreſſed, exerciſed therein and thereby: it is therefore needful that it ſhould frequently be uſed; ſeeing otherwiſe we ſhall be in danger to fail in diſcharging our chief duties, and to want the beſt graces.

It is frequency of devotion alſo which maintaineth that friendſhip with God, which is the ſoul of piety. As familiar converſation (wherein men do expreſs their minds and affections mutually) breedeth acquaintance, and cheriſheth good-will of men to one another; but long-forbearance thereof diſſolveth or ſlackeneth the bonds of amity, breaking their intimacy, and cooling their kindneſs: ſo is it in reſpect to God; it is frequent converſe with him, which begetteth a particular acquaintance with him, a mindful regard of him, a hearty liking to him, a delightful taſte of his goodneſs, and conſequently a ſincere and ſolid good-will toward him; but intermiſſion thereof produceth eſtrangement or enmity toward him. If we ſeldom come at God, we ſhall little know him, not much care for him, ſcarce remember him, reſt inſenſible of his love, and regardleſs of his favour; a coldneſs, a ſhyneſs, a diſtaſte, an antipathy toward him will by degrees creep upon us. Abſtinence from his company and preſence will caſt

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us into converſations deſtructive or prejudicial to our friendſhip with him; wherein ſoon we ſhall contract familiarity and friendſhip with his enemies, (the world and the fleſh,) which are inconſiſtent with love to him, which will diſpoſe us to forget him, or to diſlike and loathe him.

It is, in fine, the frequency of devotion, which alone can ſecure any practice thereof, at leaſt any practice thereof duly qualified; ſo hearty, ſo eaſy, ſo ſweet and delightful as it ſhould be. We have all a natural averſeneſs or indiſpoſition thereto, as requiring an abſtraction of thoughts and affections from ſenſible things, and a faſtening them upon objects purely ſpiritual; a rearing our heavy ſpirits above their common pitch; a ſtaying and ſettling our roving fancies; a compoſing our vain hearts in a ſober and ſteady frame, agreeable to devotion: to effect which things is a matter of no ſmall difficulty and pain; which, therefore, without much uſe and exerciſe, cannot be accompliſhed; but with it, may; ſo that by frequent practice the bent of our heart being turned, the ſtrangeneſs of the thing ceaſing, the difficulty of the work being ſurmounted, we ſhall obtain a good propenſion to the duty, and a great ſatisfaction therein.

This will render the way into God's preſence ſmooth and paſſable; removing, as all other obſtacles, ſo particularly thoſe of fear and doubt in reſpect to God, which may deter or diſcourage us from approaching to him. God being moſt holy and pure, moſt great and glorious, we, ſenſible of our corruption and vileneſs, may be fearful and ſhy of coming near unto him. But when, coming into his preſence, we do find, that *ſuch as his majeſty is, ſuch is his mercy*; when we do *taſte and ſee that the Lord is good*; when by experience we feel, that *in his preſence there is fulneſs of joy*; being *abundantly ſatisfied with the fatneſs of his houſe*; having our ſouls there *ſatisfied as with marrow and fatneſs*; finding, that *a day in his courts is*

Pſal. xxxiv. 8. xvi. 11. Pſ. xxxvi. 8. lxiii. 5. lxxxiv. 10.

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is better than a thouſand ſpent otherwhere; perceiving SERM. that he biddeth us welcome, that he treateth us kindly, that he ſendeth us away refreſhed with ſweeteſt comforts, and rewarded with moſt excellent benefits; this will not only reconcile our hearts to devotion, but draw us into a cordial liking and earneſt deſire thereof; ſuch as the Pſalmiſt expreſſeth, when he ſaith, *My ſoul longeth, yea even fainteth for the courts of the Lord: my heart and my fleſh crieth out for the living God.* This will engage us into ſtrong reſolutions of conſtantly practiſing it; ſuch as the ſame holy perſon again declareth in theſe words; *I love the Lord, becauſe he hath heard my voice and my ſupplications: Becauſe he hath inclined his ear unto me, therefore will I call upon him as long as I live.* Hence, inſtead of a ſuſpicious eſtrangedneſs, a ſervile dread, or an hoſtile diſaffection toward God, there will ſpring up an humble confidence, a kindly reverence, a hearty love toward him; which will upon all occaſions drive us to him, hoping for his friendly ſuccour, longing after his kind embraces. So will the frequency of devotion render it facile and pleaſant. Whereas, on the contrary, diſuſe thereof will make it at any time hard and irkſome; ſtrengthening and increaſing our natural averſeneſs thereto: performing it ſeldom, we ſhall never perform it well, with that attention, that affection, that promptitude, that willingneſs and alacrity, which are due thereto.

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Pſ. lxxxiv. 2.

Pſ. cxvi. 1, 2.

According to ſo many ſenſes, in ſo many reſpects, may we, and ſhould we obſerve this precept. From thus praying continually there can be no good exception or juſt excuſe. The moſt common pleas that will be alledged for the omiſſion thereof are two; one drawn from external avocations, the other from internal indiſpoſitions obſtructing it: both of which are ſo far from being good, that being ſcanned, they will ſoon appear ſerving rather to aggravate than to excuſe or abate the neglect.

I. I cannot, ſaith one, now attend to prayers, becauſe

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1. Do we take devotion itſelf to be no buſineſs, or a buſineſs of no conſideration? Do we conceit, when we pay God his debts, or diſcharge our duties toward him, when we crave his aid or mercy, when we ſolicit the main concernments of our ſoul, (yea, of our body alſo and its eſtate,) that we are idle or miſemployed; that we laviſh our time, or loſe our pains?

2. What other affairs can we have of greater moment or neceſſity than this? Can there be any obligation more indiſpenſable than is that of yielding due reſpect and ſervice to our Maker, our great Patron, our moſt liberal Benefactor? Can there be any intereſt more cloſe or weighty than this, of providing for our ſouls' eternal health and happineſs? Is not this indeed the great work, *the only neceſſary matter*, in compariſon whereto all other occupations are mere trifling, or unprofitable fiddling about nothing? What will all other buſineſs ſignify, what will come of it, if this be neglected? Buſy we may be, we may plod, we may drudge eternally; but all to no end. All our care is in effect improvidence, all our induſtry may be well reckoned idleneſs, if God be not ſerved, if our ſouls are not ſecured.

Luke x. 24. Job xxiii. 12. Αἱ τίχναι τῶν πραγμάτων ἐπίπονοί εἰσιν· ἀργὸν δὲ ἡ ἀσκία. *Conſt. Apoſt.* ii. 61.

3. If we ſurvey and prize all worldly buſineſſes, which among them will appear ſo importunate as to demand, ſo greedy as to devour, ſo worthy at leaſt as to deſerve all our time, that we cannot ſpare a few minutes for maintaining our moſt pleaſant intercourſe, and moſt gainful commerce with heaven? What are the great buſineſſes of the world? what but ſcraping and ſcrambling for pelf, contriving and compaſſing deſigns of ambition, courting the favour and reſpect of men, making proviſion for carnal pleaſure, gratifying fond curioſity or vain humour? And do

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do any of these deserve to be put into the scale against, shall all of them together be able to sway down our spiritual employments? Shall these images, these shadows of business, supplant or crowd our devotion; that which procureth wealth inestimably precious, pleasure infinitely satisfactory, honour incomparably noble above all this world can afford? If the expence of time be, as the Philosopher said, πολυτελέστατον ἀνάλωμα, *the most precious expence* that can be; how can it better be laid out than upon the worthiest things, such as devotion alone can afford the purchase and possession of? True virtue, sound wisdom, a quiet conscience, and steady tranquillity of mind, the love and favour of God, a title unto endless joy and bliss, are purely the gifts of heaven; and thence they will not descend of themselves, but prayer must fetch them down. If nothing then in the world be comparable to those things, how can any time be so well spent as in prayer, which acquireth them; which also best secureth whatever we have, and is the readiest way to procure whatever we want?

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4. Should we not farther, honestly comparing things, easily discern, that it is no such indispensable business, but rather indeed some base dotage on lucre, some inveigling bait of pleasure, some bewitching transport of fancy, that crosseth our devotion? Is it not often a complimental visit, an appointment to tattle or to tipple, a match for sport, a wild ramble in vice or folly, that so deeply engageth us to put off our duty?

5. Yea, is it not commonly sloth rather than activity, an averseness from this rather than an inclination to any other employment, which diverteth us from our prayers? Is not, I say, the true reason why we pray so seldom, not because we are very busy, but because we are extremely idle; so idle, that we cannot willingly take the pains to unscrew our affections from sensible things, to reduce our wandering

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ing thoughts, to compoſe our hearts into a right frame, to bend our untoward inclinations to a compliance with our duty? Is it not becauſe we do not feel that ſavour and ſatisfaction in theſe, which we do in other trivial and worthleſs employments, nor will be at the trouble to work ſuch diſpoſitions in our ſouls? Do we not betake ourſelves to other converſations and commerces merely for refuge, ſhunning this intercourſe with God and with ourſelves? Theſe, I fear, are oftener the real cauſes of our neglecting devotion, than any ſuch mighty avocations which we pretend.

6. But were there indeed not only a counterfeit or imaginary, but a real competition between devotion and other lawful buſineſs, which, in reaſon, ſhould carry it? in conſcience, which of the two ſhould be forborne or ſuſpended? Is it not evidently better, that the purſuit of our temporal intereſts, whatever they be, ſhould be a little checked, than that our affairs of everlaſting conſequence ſhould be quite laid aſide? that we ſhould venture a ſmall impairing of our eſtate, than ſurely endamage our ſouls? that we hazard to diſappoint or diſpleaſe a man, than dare to affront and offend the Almighty God?

7. Were it not ſtrangely abſurd and unhandſome to ſay, I cannot wait on God, becauſe I muſt ſpeak with a friend; I cannot go to church, although God calleth me thither, becauſe I muſt haſte to market; I cannot ſtand to pray, becauſe I am to receive money, or to make up a bargain; I cannot diſcharge my duty to God, becauſe a greater obligation than that doth lie upon me? How unconceivable an honour, how unvaluable a benefit is it, that the incomprehenſibly great and glorious Majeſty of heaven doth vouchſafe us the liberty to approach ſo near unto him, to converſe ſo freely with him, to demand and derive from his hand the ſupply of all our needs, and ſatisfaction of all our reaſonable deſires? and is it then juſt or ſeemly, by ſuch compariſons to diſparage

rage his favour, by such pretences to baffle with his goodness? SERM. XV.

Put the case our prince should call for us to speak with him about matters nearly touching his service and our welfare; would it be according unto duty, discretion, or decency, to reply, that we are at present busy, and have no leisure, and must therefore hold ourselves excused; but that, if he will stay awhile, at another time, when we have less to do, we shall be perhaps disposed to wait upon him? The case is propounded by our Lord in that parable, wherein God is represented as a great man, that had prepared a feast, and invited many guests thereto; but they excused themselves: *One said, that he had purchased land, and must needs go out to see it; another had bought five yoke of oxen, and must go to prove them; another had married a wife, and therefore could not come.* These indeed were affairs considerable, as this world hath any; but yet the excuses did not satisfy; for, notwithstanding, the great person was angry, and took the neglect in huge disdain. Matt. xxii. 2, &c. Luke xiv. 16, &c. Ἔφυτα ἔτι σκῆψις ταῦτα καὶ πρόφασις, &c. *Chrys. in Joh. Orat.* 11.

8. Moreover, if we reflect what vast portions of time we squander away upon our petty matters, upon voluptuous enjoyments, upon fruitless pastimes, upon impertinent talk; how can we satisfy ourselves in not allotting competent time for God's service, our own salvation, and the future everlasting state? Doth not he, who, with the continuance of our life, bestoweth on us all our time, deserve that a pittance of it should be reserved for himself? Can all the world duly claim so great an allowance thereof? May not our soul (which is far our noblest part, which indeed is all ourselves) justly challenge a good share of our time to be expended on it? or shall this mortal husk engross it all? Must eternity, which comprehendeth all time, have no time belonging to it, or allotted for its concernments?

9. Again, is it not great imprudence so to lay our business, that any other matter shall thwart or thrust out

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out devotion? Easily with a little providence may things be so ordered, that it, without interfering or justling, may well consist with all other both needful business and convenient divertisement; so that it shall neither obstruct them, nor they extrude it: and are we not very culpable, if we do not use so much providence[b]?

10. In truth, attending upon devotion can be no obstacle, but will be great furtherance to all other good business. It is the most sure, most pleasant, most advantageous and compendious way of transacting affairs, to mix prayers and praises with them; it is the best oil that can be, to make the wheels of action go on smoothly and speedily: it not only sanctifieth our undertakings, but much promoteth and exceedingly sweeteneth the management of them. For the conscience of having rendered unto God his due respect and service, of having entrusted our affairs to his care, of having consequently engaged his protection and assistance for us, will dispose us to do things with a courageous alacrity and comfortable satisfaction; will fill us with a good hope of prospering; will prepare us however to be satisfied with the event, whatever it shall be; will in effect procure a blessing and happy success, such as we may truly rejoice and triumph in, as conferred by God in favour to us. Whereas neglecting these duties, we can have no solid content or savoury complacence in any thing we undertake: reflecting on such misbehaviour (if we be not downright infidels, or obdurate reprobates in impiety) will quash or damp our courage: having thence forfeited all pretence to God's succour, and provoked him to cross us, we must needs suspect disappointment: as we have no reasonable

[b] Πρῶτον μὲν, αὐτὸ τοῦτο ἔγκλημα ὃ μικρὸν, τὸ κυκλοῦσθαι τοσούτων πραγμάτων πλήθει, καὶ τοῖς βιωτικοῖς ὅτω προσηλῶσθαι διὰ παντὸς, ὡς μηδὲ μικρὰν εἰς τὰ πάντων ἀναγκαιότατα ἄγειν σχολήν. *Chryf. in Job.* i. 14. *(Or.* 11.*)*

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ground to hope for ſucceſs; ſo we cannot, if ſucceſs arriveth, be heartily ſatisfied therein, or take it for a bleſſing. SERM. XV.

He therefore that is ſuch a niggard of his time, that he grudgeth to withhold any part thereof from his worldly occaſions, deeming all time caſt away that is laid out in waiting upon God, is really moſt unthrifty and prodigal thereof: by not ſparing a little, he waſteth all his time to no purpoſe; by ſo eagerly purſuing, he effectually ſetteth back his deſigns; by prepoſterouſly affecting to diſpatch his affairs, he rendereth them endleſs, or, which is the ſame, altogether unprofitable.

In fine, we may be ſure that no time is ſpent even ſo prudently and politicly, with ſo great advantage and ſo real fruit to ourſelves, as that which is employed upon devotion. In ſacrificing his time, his pains, his ſubſtance, any thing he hath or can do, to God's ſervice, no man can be a loſer.

We have alſo many examples plainly demonſtrating the conſiſtency of this practice with all other buſineſs. Who ever had more or greater affairs to manage, and who ever managed them with greater ſucceſs than David; upon whom did lie the burden of a royal eſtate, and the care over a moſt populous nation; the which *he fed with a faithful and true heart, and ruled prudently with all his power*; who waged great wars, vanquiſhed mighty enemies, achieved many glorious exploits, underwent many grievous troubles? Yet could not ſuch engagements diſtract or depreſs his mind from a conſtant attendance on devotion. *I will bleſs the Lord at all times; his praiſe ſhall be continually in my mouth. My mouth ſhall ſhew forth thy righteouſneſs and thy ſalvation all the day. I will abide in thy tabernacle for ever.* So he declareth his reſolution and his practice. Who is more preſſingly employed than was Daniel, firſt preſident over ſo vaſt a kingdom, chief miniſter of ſtate to the greateſt monarch on earth? Yet conſtantly *thrice a day*

Pſ. lxxviii. 72.

Pſ. xxxiv. 1. lxxi. 6. cxlv. 2. lxxv. 28. lxi. 4.

Dan. vi. 10.

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SERM. XV. *day did he pray and give thanks unto his God.* Who can be more entangled in varieties and intricacies of care, of pains, of trouble, than was he that preſcribeth unto us this rule of praying continually? Upon him did lie *the care of all the churches*; *night and day with labour and toil did he work* for the ſuſtenance of his life, *that he might not* (to the diſparagement of the Goſpel) *burden any man*; perpetually he was engaged in all ſorts of labour and travail, ever conflicting with perils, with wants, with inconveniences numberleſs: yet did he exactly conform his practice to his rule, being no leſs indefatigable and inceſſant in his devotion than he was in his buſineſs. Who ever managed a greater empire than Conſtantine? Yet *every day*, as Euſebius reporteth, *at ſtated times, ſhutting himſelf up, he alone privately did converſe with his God*[c]. The moſt pious men indeed have never been idle or careleſs men, but always moſt buſy and active, moſt induſtrious in their callings, moſt provident for their families, moſt officious toward their friends, moſt ready to ſerve their country, moſt abundant in all good works; yet have they always been moſt conſtant in devotion. So that experience clearly doth evidence, how reconcileable much devotion is to much buſineſs; and that conſequently the proſecution of the one cannot well palliate the neglect of the other.

2 Cor. xi. 28.
2 Theſſ. iii. 8.

II. No better can any man ward himſelf from blame, by imputing the neglect of devotion to ſome indiſpoſition within him thereto. For this is only to cover one fault with another, or to lay on a patch more ugly than the ſore. It is, in effect, to ſay we may ſin, becauſe we have a mind to it, or care not to do otherwiſe. Our indiſpoſition itſelf is criminal; and, as ſignifying ſomewhat habitual or ſettled, is worſe than a ſingle omiſſion: it ought therefore to

[c] Καιροῖς ἑκάστης ἡμέρας τακτοῖς ἑαυτὸν ἐγκλείων, μόνος μόνῳ τῷ αὐτῷ προσωμίλει Θεῷ. *Euſeb. de Vita Conſt.* iv. 22.

be

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be corrected and cured; and the way to do it is, by setting presently upon the practice of the duty, and persisting resolutely therein: otherwise how is it possible that it should ever be removed? The longer we forbear it, the more seldom we perform it, the stronger surely will our indisposition grow, and the more difficult it will be to remove it. But if (with any degree of seriousness and good intention) we come indisposed to prayer, we may thereby be formed into better disposition, and by continual attendance thereon, we shall (God's grace co-operating, which never is wanting to serious and honest intentions) grow toward a perfect fitness for it: prayer by degrees will become natural and delightful to us. SERM. XV.

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SERMON XVI.

Of the Duty of Thankſgiving.

EPHES. v. 20.

Giving thanks always for all things unto God.

SERM. XVI.

THESE words, although (as the very ſyntax doth immediately diſcover) they bear a relation to, and have a fit coherence with, thoſe that precede, may yet, (eſpecially conſidering St. Paul's ſtyle and manner of expreſſion in the preceptive and exhortative part of his Epiſtles) without any violence or prejudice on either hand, be ſevered from the context, and conſidered diſtinctly by themſelves. And (to avoid encumbrance by farther compariſon) ſo taking them we may obſerve, that every ſingle word among them carries with it ſomething of notable emphaſis and eſpecial ſignificancy. The firſt [*Giving thanks*] expreſſes the ſubſtance of a duty, to which we are exhorted. The next (I mean, in order of conſtruction) [*to God*] denotes the object or term to which it is directed. The following [*always*] determines the main circumſtance of this and all other duties, the time of performance. The laſt [*for all things*] declares the adequate matter of the duty, and how far it ſhould extend. Theſe particulars I ſhall conſider ſeverally, and in order.

Vid. Rom. xii. Eph. vi, &c.

I. Firſt

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SERM. XVI. I. Firſt then, concerning the duty itſelf, *to give thanks*, or rather, *to be thankful*; (for εὐχαριστεῖν doth not only ſignify *gratias agere, reddere, dicere*, to *give, render*, or *declare thanks*, but alſo *gratias habere, grate affectum eſſe*, to be *thankfully diſpoſed*, to entertain a grateful affection, ſenſe, or memory: in which more comprehenſive notion I mean to conſider it, as including the whole duty or virtue of gratitude due to Almighty God for all his benefits, favours, and mercies;) I ſay, concerning this duty itſelf, (abſtractedly conſidered) as it involves a reſpect to benefits or good things received; ſo in its employment about them it imports, requires, or ſuppoſes theſe following particulars.

1. It implies a right apprehenſion of, and conſequently a conſiderate attention unto, benefits conferred. For he that is either wholly ignorant of his obligations, or miſtakes them, or paſſes them over with a ſlight and ſuperficial view, can nowiſe be grateful. *Whoſo is wiſe, and will obſerve theſe things, even they ſhall underſtand the loving-kindneſs of the Lord.* *Men ſhall fear, and ſhall declare the work of God; for they ſhall wiſely conſider of his doings. The works of the Lord are great, ſought out of all that have pleaſure therein. O taſte* (firſt, and then) *ſee that the Lord is good.*

Pſ. cvii. 43. Pſ. lxiv. 9. Pſ. cxi. 2. Pſ. xxxiv. 8.

This is the method that great maſter of thankſgiving preſcribes; firſt experimental notice, then wiſe conſideration, then grateful ſenſe, then public acknowledgment. And thoſe we find both by him and by the Prophet Iſaiah (in the very ſame words) reprehended as wickedly ingrateful perſons, who *regarded not the work of the Lord, nor conſidered the operation of his hands.* 'Tis part therefore of this duty incumbent on us, to take notice of diligently, and carefully to conſider, the divine benefits; not to let them paſs undiſcerned and unregarded by us, as perſons either wofully blind, or ſtupidly drowſy, or totally unconcerned.

Pſ. xxviii. 5. Iſa. v. 12.

'Tis

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'Tis a general fault, that the moſt common and frequent, the moſt obvious and conſpicuous favours of God, (like the ordinary phænomena of nature, which, as Ariſtotle obſerves, though in themſelves moſt admirable, are yet leaſt admired,) the conſtant riſing of the ſun upon us, the deſcent of fruitful ſhowers, the recourſe of temperate ſeaſons, the continuance of our life, the enjoyment of health, the providential diſpenſation of wealth, and competent means of livelihood, the daily protection from incident dangers, the helps of improving knowledge, obtaining virtue, becoming happy, and ſuch like moſt excellent benefits, we commonly little mind or regard, and conſequently ſeldom return the thanks due for them. Poſſibly ſome rare accidents of providence, ſome extraordinary judgment, ſome miraculous deliverance, may rouſe and awaken our attention: (as it is ſaid of the Iſraelites, *When he ſlew them, then they ſought him, and remembered that God was their rock, and the high God their Redeemer:*) but ſuch advertency is not the effect ſo much of gratitude, as of curioſity or of neceſſity: the notable rarity invites, or ſome powerful impulſe commands our notice. But the truly grateful induſtriouſly deſign, and are ſtudious to know throughly their obligations, that they may be able to render anſwerable returns for them,

Pſ. lxxviii. 34, 35.

2. This duty requires a faithful retention of benefits in memory, and conſequently frequent reflections upon them. For he that is no longer affected with a benefit than it incurs the ſenſe, and ſuffers not itſelf to be diſregarded, is far from being grateful; nay, if we believe the philoſopher, is ingrateful in the worſt kind, and higheſt degree. For, *Ingratus eſt*, ſaith he, *qui beneficium accepiſſe ſe negat, quod accepit; ingratus eſt, qui diſſimulat; ingratus, qui non reddit: ingratiſſimus omnium, qui oblitus eſt. He that falſely denies the reception of a benefit, and he that diſſembles it, and he that doth not repay it, is ingrateful; but moſt in-*

Χάρις ὅτις εὖ πάθοντα ἀμνημονεῖ.

Sen. iii. de Benef. cap. 1.

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SERM. XVI.

grateful of all is he that forgets it. It is a ſign the benefit made no deep impreſſion on his mind, ſince it left no diſcernible footſtep there; that he hardly ever thought of making recompence, ſince he hath ſuffered himſelf to become altogether uncapable of doing it: neither is there any hope of his amending the paſt neglect; no ſhame, no repentance, no fair occaſion can redeem him from ingratitude, in whom the very remembrance of his obligation is extinguiſhed.

If to be ſenſible of a preſent good turn deſerved the title of gratitude, all men certainly would be grateful: the Jews queſtionleſs were ſo. When Almighty God, by his wonderful power in extraordinary ways, delivered them from the tyranny and oppreſſion of their prevalent enemies; when he cauſed ſtreams to guſh forth from the bowels of a hard rock, to refreſh their thirſt; when bread deſcended from heaven in ſhowers, and the winds were winged with fleſh, to ſatisfy their greedy deſires; then ſurely they were not altogether unſenſible of the divine goodneſs; then could they acknowledge his power, and be forward enough to engage themſelves in promiſes of correſpondent obſervance toward him for the future. But the miſchief was, immediately after, as the Pſalmiſt complains, *They forgat his works, and the wonders he had ſhewed them: They remembered not his hand, nor the day when he delivered them from the enemy.* They *refuſed to obey, neither were mindful of the wonders that God did among them,* as Nehemiah confeſſes in their behalf. *Of the rock that begat them they were unmindful, and forgot the God that formed them,* as it is in Deuteronomy. They diſtruſted his promiſes, repined at his dealings, diſobeyed his laws, and treacherouſly apoſtatized from his covenant. Such were the fruits of their ingrateful forgetfulneſs; which therefore that people is ſo often charged with, and ſo ſharply reproved for by the Prophets.

Pſ. lxxviii. 11. 42.

Neh. ix. 17.

Deut. xxxii. 18.

On the contrary, we find that great pattern of gra-

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gratitude, the royal Prophet David, continually re- SERM. volving in his thoughts, imprinting upon his fancy, XVI. ſtudying and meditating upon, recollecting and renewing in his memory, the reſults of divine favour. *I will remember*, ſaith he, *thy wonders of old*; *I will meditate of all thy works, and talk of thy doings*: and, *I remember the days of old*; *I will meditate on all thy works*; *I muſe on the works of thy hands*: and, *Bleſs the Lord, O my ſoul, and forget not all his benefits*: and, *My mouth ſhall praiſe thee with joyful lips, when I remember thee upon my bed, and meditate on thee in the night-watches, becauſe thou haſt been my help.* No place unfit, it ſeems, no time unſeaſonable, for the practice of this duty; not the place deſigned for reſt, not the time due to ſleep, but, as David thought, more due to a wakeful contemplation of the divine goodneſs. Whoſe vigilant gratitude we ſhould ſtrive to imitate, devoting our moſt ſolitary and retired, our moſt ſad and ſerious thoughts (not the ſtudies only of our cloſets, but the conſultations alſo of our pillow) to the preſervation of thoſe bleſſed ideas; that neither length of time may deface them in our fancy, nor other care thruſt them out thence.

Thy loving kindneſs is ever before mine eyes. Pſ. xxvi. 3. lxxvii. 11, 12. cxliii. 5. ciii. 2. lxiii. 5, 6, 7.

It was a ſatirical anſwer, (that of Ariſtotle) and highly opprobrious to mankind; who being aſked, Τί τάχιστα γηράσκει; *What doth the ſooneſt grow old?* replied, Χάρις, *Thanks*: and ſo was that adagial verſe, Ἅμ' ἠλέηται, καὶ τέθνηκεν ἡ χάρις· *No ſooner the courteſy born, than the reſentment thereof dead.* Such reproachful aphoriſms we ſhould labour to confute, eſpecially as they are applicable to the divine favours, by ſo maintaining and cheriſhing our thanks for them, that they neither decay with age, nor prematurely die, nor be buried in oblivion; but may reſemble the pictures and poetical deſcriptions of the graces, thoſe goodly daughters of heaven, ſmiling always with a never-fading ſerenity of countenance, and flouriſhing in an immortal youth.

The middle, we may obſerve, and the ſafeſt, and

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SERM. XVI. the faireſt, and the moſt conſpicuous places in cities are uſually deputed for the erections of ſtatues and monuments dedicated to the memory of worthy men, who have nobly deſerved of their countries. In like manner ſhould we in the heart and centre of our ſoul, in the beſt and higheſt apartments thereof, in the places moſt expoſed to ordinary obſervation, and moſt ſecure from the invaſions of worldly care, erect lively repreſentations of, and laſting memorials unto, the divine bounty; conſtantly attending to which we may be diſpoſed to gratitude. Not one bleſſing, not the leaſt favourable paſſage of providence ought to periſh with us, though long ſince paſt, and removed out of the ſphere of preſent ſenſe.

Pſ. lxxi. 6. We muſt not in our old age forget who formed us in the womb, who brought us into the light, who ſuckled our infancy, who educated our childhood, who governed our youth, who conducted our manhood through the manifold hazards, troubles, and diſaſters of life. Nor in our proſperity, our affluence of good things, our poſſeſſion of Canaan, ſhould we be unmindful of him who relieved us in our ſtraits, who ſupplied our wants, ſuſtained our adverſity, who redeemed us from Egypt, and led us through the wilderneſs. A ſucceſſion of new and freſh benefits ſhould not (as among ſome ſavages the manner is for the young to make away the old) ſupplant and expunge ancient ones, but make them rather more dear and venerable to us. Time ſhould not weaken or diminiſh, but rather confirm and radicate in us the remembrance of God's goodneſs; to render it, as it doth gold and wine, more precious and more ſtrong. We have uſually a memory more than enough tenacious of injuries and ill turns done to us: let it never be ſaid, to the diſgrace of that noble faculty, that we can hardly forget the diſcourteſies of man, but not eaſily remember the favours of God. But farther,

Deut. vi. 12. viii. 11.

3. This

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SERM. XVI.

3. This duty implies a due eſteem and valuation of benefits; that the nature and quality, the meaſure and quantity, the circumſtances and conſequences of them be well expended; elſe the gratitude is like to be none, or very defective. For we commenſurate our thankfulneſs, not ſo much to the intrinſic excellency of things, as to our peculiar eſtimations of them. A Cynic perhaps would not return more thanks for a diamond, than for a pebble; nor more gratefully receive a talent of gold, than an ounce of copper; becauſe he equally values, or rather alike contemns both.

Wherefore we find our (never-to-be-forgotten) example, the devout thankſgiver, David, continually declaring the great price he ſet upon the divine favours; admiring and diſplaying their tranſcendent perfections, their wonderful greatneſs, their boundleſs extenſion, their exceſſive multitude, their endleſs duration, their advantageous circumſtances, (the excellent needfulneſs, convenience, and ſeaſonableneſs of them; together with the admirable freeneſs, wiſdom, and power of the Benefactor, ſhining forth in and by them.) *I will praiſe thee, O Lord,* ſaith he, *among the people, I will ſing unto thee among the nations:* Pſ. cviii. 3, 4. *for thy mercy is great unto the heavens, and thy faithfulneſs reacheth unto the clouds.* And, *Remember the marvellous works that he hath done, his wonders, and the judgments of his mouth. He is the Lord our God, his judgments are in all the earth.* And again, *Thy mercy,* Pſ. cv. 5. 7. Pſ. xxxvi. *O Lord, is in the heavens, thy faithfulneſs reacheth unto the clouds. Thy righteouſneſs is like the great mountains; thy judgments are a great deep: O Lord, thou preſerveſt man and beaſt. How excellent is thy loving-kindneſs, O God!* and, *How precious are thy thoughts unto me, O Lord! O how great is the ſum of them! If I ſhould count them, they are more in number than the ſand.* And again, *His work is honourable and glorious, his righteouſneſs endureth for ever:* and, *The Lord is good to all, and his tender mercies are over all his works:* and, 5, 6, 7. Pſ. cxxxix. 17, 18. Pſ. cxi. 3. cxlv. 9.

Bleſſed

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SERM. XVI. *Bleſſed be the Lord, who daily loadeth us with his benefits.*

Pſ. lxviii. 19.

In ſuch manner ought we diligently to ſurvey and judiciouſly to eſtimate the effects of divine beneficence, examining every part, and deſcanting upon every circumſtance thereof; like thoſe that contemplate ſome rare beauty, or ſome excellent picture; ſome commending the exact proportions, ſome the graceful features, ſome the lively colours diſcernible therein. There is not the leaſt of the divine favours, which, if we conſider the condeſcenſive tenderneſs, the clear intention, the undeſerved frankneſs, the cheerful debonairity expreſſed therein, hath not dimenſions larger than our comprehenſion, colours too fair, and lineaments too comely for our weak ſight thoroughly to diſcern; requiring therefore our higheſt eſteem and our utmoſt thanks.

'Tis perhaps ſomewhat dangerous to affix a determinate value upon any of God's benefits: (for to value them ſeems to undervalue them, they being really ineſtimable:) what then is it to extenuate, to vilify, to deſpiſe the greateſt? We ſhould eſteem them, as we meaſure the heavens with our eye, as we compute the ſands upon the ſhore, as we would prize inexhauſtible mines of gold, and treaſures of pearl; that is, by confeſſing heartily their worth ſurpaſſes the ſtrength of our imagination to conceive, and of our ſpeech to utter; that they are immenſe, innumerable, unconceivable, and unexpreſſible. But ſtill,

4. *Giving thanks* imports, that benefits be received with a willing mind, a hearty ſenſe, a vehement affection. The forementioned particulars are indeed neceſſary properties, inſeparable concomitants, or prerequiſite conditions to: but a cheerful and cordial acceptance of benefits is the form, as it were, and ſoul, the life and ſpirit, the principal and moſt eſſential ingredient of this duty.

It was not altogether unreaſonable, though it went for

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for a paradox, that dictate of the Stoics, that *animus* SERM. *ſufficit animo*, and, that *qui libenter accepit, beneficium* XVI. *reddidit:* that he, who with a willing and well-affected mind receives a courteſy, hath fully diſcharged the duty of gratitude; that other endeavours of return and compenſation are rather handſome acceſſions to it, than indiſpenſably requiſite to the completion thereof. For as in the collation, it is not the gold or the ſilver, the food or the apparel, in which the benefit conſiſts, but the will and benevolent intention of him that beſtows them; ſo reciprocally it is the good acceptance, the ſenſibleneſs of, and acquieſcence in the benefactor's goodneſs, that conſtitutes the gratitude; which who affords, though he be never capable of yielding other ſatisfaction, *voluntate voluntati ſatisfecit*; and *Regum æquavit opes animo*——. It is ingenuity that conſtitutes (reſpectively) both a bountiful giver, and a thankful receiver. A truly noble benefactor purely aimeth at not any material reward, or advantage to himſelf; (it were trading this, not beneficence;) but the good profit and content of him, to whom he diſpenſeth his favour: of which being aſſured, he reſts ſatisfied, and accounts himſelf royally recompenſed [a].

Such a benefactor is Almighty God, and ſuch a tribute he requires of us; a ready embracement of, and a joyful complacency in his kindneſs; even ſuch as he expreſſed, who ſaid, *Becauſe thy loving-kind-* Pſ. lxiii. 3. *neſs is better than life, my lips ſhall praiſe thee:* and, *My* civ. 33. lxxi. 22. *ſoul ſhall be filled as with marrow and fatneſs, and my* lxiii. 5. ix. *mouth ſhall praiſe thee with joyful lips:* and, *I will praiſe* 1, 2. *thee with my whole heart; I will be glad and rejoice in*

[a] Quoties quod propoſuit quis conſequitur, capit operis ſui fructum. Qui beneficium dat, quid proponit ſibi? prodeſſe ei cui dat, et ſibi voluptati eſſe: non ſibi invicem reddi voluit; aut non fuit beneficium, ſed negotiatio. Beneficii proprium eſt, nihil de reditu cogitare. *Senec.*

Nec eſt dubium quin is qui liberalis benignuſque dicitur, officium, non fructum ſequatur. *Cic. de Leg.* i.

thee:

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SERM. XVI. *thee:* and, *Bleſs the Lord, O my ſoul; and all that is within me, praiſe his holy name.*

No holocauſt is ſo acceptable to God, as a heart enflamed with the ſenſe of his goodneſs. He loves not only ἱλαρὸν δότην, (*a merry giver*) but ἱλαρὸν δέκτην (*a cheerful receiver*) alſo. He would have us, as to deſire his favour with a greedy appetite, ſo to taſte it with a ſavoury reliſh. He deſigns not only to *fill* our mouths with *food*, but *our hearts* alſo *with gladneſs*.

Pſ. ciii. 1. 2 Cor. ix. 7. Acts xiv. 17.

We muſt not ſeem to grudge or repine, to murmur or diſdain, that we are neceſſitated to be beholden to him; leſt it happen to us as it did to them of whom it is ſaid, *While the meat was yet in their mouths, the wrath of God came upon them, and ſlew the fatteſt of them.* Yea, 'tis our duty not to be contented only, but to be delighted, to be tranſported, to be raviſhed with the emanations of his love: to entertain them with ſuch a diſpoſition of mind, as the dry and parched ground imbibes the ſoft dew and gentle ſhowers; as the chill and darkſome air admits the benign influences of heavenly light; as the thirſty ſoul takes in the ſweet and cooling ſtream. He that with a ſullen look, a dead heart, a faint ſenſe, a cold hand, embraces the gifts of heaven, is really unthankful, though with deluges of wine and oil he makes the altars to overflow, and clouds the ſky with the ſteam of his ſacrifices. But yet farther,

Pſ. lxxviii. 30, 31.

5. This duty requires due acknowledgment of our obligation, ſignifications of our notice, declarations of our eſteem and good acceptance of favours conferred. It is the worſt and moſt deteſtable of ingratitudes, that which proceeds from pride and ſcorn: and ſuch is he guilty of, who is either unwilling or aſhamed to confeſs himſelf obliged; who purpoſely diſſembles a benefit, or diſavows the benefactor; who refuſes to render thoſe moſt manifeſtly due, and moſt [b] eaſily diſ-

[b] Οὐδὲ γὰρ βαρύ τι καὶ ἐπαχθὲς ἐπιζητεῖ παρ' ἡμῶν, ἀλλ' ἢ τὸ ὁμολογεῖν μόνον τὰς τοσαύτας εὐεργεσίας, καὶ τὰς ὑπὲρ τούτων αὐτῷ εὐχαριστίας ἀναφέρειν. *Chryſ.* tom. i. pag. 54.

charged,

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charged, thoſe neither toilſome nor expenſive oblations SERM. of praiſe and acknowledgment. This part of our duty XVI. requires, that we offer to God, not coſtly hecatombs, ——— but the *calves* only *of our lips*, (as the prophet Hoſea Hoſ. xiv. 2. ſpeaks;) not the fruit of our lands, but καρπὸν χειλέων only, (as the Apoſtle to the Hebrews ſtyles it,) *the fruit* Heb. xiii. 15. *of our lips, confeſſing to his name*; that we employ ſome ὁμολογόντων. few blaſts of the breath he gave us, on the celebration of his goodneſs, and advancement of his repute. *I will praiſe the name of God with a ſong, and will mag-* Pſ. lxix. 30, *nify him with thankſgiving. This ſhall pleaſe the Lord* 31. *better than an ox or bullock that hath horns and hoofs*, ſaith David.

And ſurely it is the leaſt homage we in gratitude owe, and can pay to Almighty God, to avow our dependence upon and obligation to him for the good things we enjoy, to acknowledge that his favours do deſerve thanks, to publiſh to the world our experience of his goodneſs, to proclaim ſolemnly with the voice of thankſgiving his moſt deſerved praiſe; reſembling him who abounds in ſuch expreſſions as theſe: *I will* Pſ. lxxxix. *ſing of the mercies of the Lord for ever; with my mouth will* 1. xxvi. 7. cxlv. 5. *I make known his faithfulneſs to all generations. I will* xl. 10. *publiſh with the voice of thankſgiving, and tell of all his* Vid. Pſ. lxvi. 5. O come hither, and behold the works of God, &c. *wondrous works. I will ſpeak of the glorious honour of thy majeſty, and of thy wondrous works. I have not hid thy righteouſneſs in my heart, I have declared thy faithfulneſs and thy ſalvation: I have not concealed thy loving-kindneſs and thy truth from the great congregation.*

Thus if a grateful affection live in our hearts, it will reſpire through our mouths, and diſcover itſelf in the motion of our lips. There will be a conſpiracy and faithful correſpondence between our mind and our tongue: if the one be ſenſible, the other will not be ſilent; as if the ſpring works, the wheels will turn about, and the bell not fail to ſpeak. Neither ſhall we content ourſelves in loneſome tunes, and private ſoliloquies, to whiſper out the divine praiſes; but ſhall loudly excite and provoke others to

SERM. XVI. to a melodious conſonance with us. We ſhall, with the ſweet ſinger of Iſrael, cite and invoke heaven and earth; the celeſtial choir of angels; the ſeveral eſtates and generations of men, the numberleſs company of all the creatures, to aſſiſt and join in concert with us, in celebrating the worthy deeds, and magnifying the glorious name of our moſt mighty Creator, of our moſt bountiful Benefactor.

Gratitude is of a fruitful and diffuſive nature, of a free and communicative diſpoſition, of an open and ſociable temper: it will be imparting, diſcovering, and propagating itſelf; it affects light, company, and liberty; it cannot endure to be ſmothered in privacy and obſcurity. Its beſt inſtrument therefore is ſpeech, that moſt natural, proper, and eaſy mean of converſation, of ſignifying our conceptions, of conveying, and as it were transfunding our thoughts and our paſſions into each other [c]. This therefore *glory of ours*, and beſt *organ* that we have, (as the Pſalmiſt ſeems to call it) our tongue, we ſhould in all reaſon devote to the honour, and conſecrate to the praiſe of him who made it, and who conſerves it ſtill in tune. Pſ. lvii. 8.

And, the farther to provoke us, we may conſider, that it hath been the manner prompted by nature, and authoriſed by general practice, for men of all nations, and all times, and all ways, by compoſed hymns and panegyrical elogies, to expreſs their gratitude for the gifts of nature, and for the benefits indulged by Providence; in their public ſacrifices and ſolemn feſtivities extolling the excellent qualities of their imaginary deities, and reciting the famous achievements of their heroes and ſuppoſed benefactors: to whoſe favourable help and bleſſing, in their conceit, they owed the fruits of the earth, the comforts of life, the defence and patronage of their countries: being indeed miſtaken in the object, but not tranſgreſſing in the ſubſtance of the

[c] Ψυχὴ γὰρ, οἶμαι, ψυχῇ καὶ πνεῦμα πνεύματι συναπλόμενα κατὰ τὴν τῆς λόγου πορείαν, &c. *Clem. Alex. Strom.* i. p. 270.

duty;

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duty; paying a due debt, though to falſe creditors. And I wiſh we were as ready to imitate them in the one, as we are, perhaps, prone to blame them for the other. For, certainly, acknowledgments of the divine goodneſs, and ſolemn teſtifications of our thankful ſenſe thereof, (whatever the abuſed world may now imagine) was always, is now, and ever will be the principal and moſt noble part of all religion immediately addreſſed to God. But moreover, SERM. XVI.

6. This duty requires endeavours of real compenſation, and a ſatisfactory requital of benefits, according to the ability and opportunity of the receiver: that we do not only verbally *dicere*, and *agnoſcere*; but really *agere*, and *referre gratias:* that to him, who hath by his beneficence obliged us, we miniſter reciprocal aſſiſtance, comfort, and relief, if he need them, and be capable to receive them; however, by evident teſtimonies to diſcover our ready diſpoſition to make ſuch real returns; and withal, to ſuit our actions to his good liking, and in our carriage to comply with his reaſonable deſires. For, *as the earth which drinketh the rain often coming upon it, and* having been by great labour tilled, and manured with expence, *yieldeth* yet no *meet herbage*, or *fruit agreeable to the expectation of him that dreſſeth it*, but is either wholly barren, or *produceth* only *thorns and briars, is* (as the Apoſtle to the Hebrews tells us) *to be reprobated, and nigh unto curſing*; that is, deſerves no farther care or culture to be employed on it, and is to be reputed deſperately worthleſs: ſo is he, (that we may apply an *apodoſis* to the Apoſtle's compariſon) who, daily partaking the influences of divine providence and bounty, affords no anſwerable return, to be accounted execrably unthankful, and unworthy of any farther favour to be ſhewed toward him. 1 Sam. xii. 24. Only fear the Lord, and ſerve him in truth, with all your heart: for conſider how great things he hath done for you. Heb. vi. 7, 8. εὔθετον βοτάνην.

'Tis true, our *righteouſneſs* (or *beneficence*, ſo the word there ſignifies) *doth not extend unto God:* His benefits exceed all poſſibility of any proportionable requital: He doth not need, nor can ever immediately Pſ. xvi. 2.

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SERM. XVI. ately receive any advantage from us: we cannot enrich him with our gifts, who by unqueſtionable right, and in unalterable poſſeſſion, is Lord and Maſter of all things that do actually or can poſſibly exiſt; nor advance him by our weak commendations, who already enjoyeth the ſupreme pitch of glory; nor any way contribute to his in itſelf complete and indefectible beatitude. Yet we may by appoſite ſignifications declare our willingneſs to ſerve and exalt him: we may by our obſequious demeanor highly pleaſe and content him: we may, by our charity and benignity to thoſe whoſe good he tenders, yield (though not an adequate, yet) an acceptable return to his benefits.

Pſ. cxvi. 12. *What ſhall I render unto the Lord for all his benefits?* ſaith David, in way of counſel and deliberation: and

Pſ. cxvi. 13, 14. thereupon reſolves, *I will take the cup of ſalvation, and call upon the name of the Lord: I will pay my vows unto the Lord.* Seaſonable benedictions, officious addreſſes, and faithful performances of vows, he intimates to bear ſome ſhadow at leaſt, ſome reſemblance of compenſation. And ſo did his wiſe ſon likewiſe, when

Prov. iii. 9. he thus adviſed, *Honour the Lord with thy ſubſtance, and with the firſt-fruits of thy increaſe.*

Almighty God, though he really doth, and cannot otherwiſe do, yet will not ſeem to beſtow his favours altogether *gratis*, but to expect ſome competent return, ſome ſmall uſe and income from them. He will aſſert his rightful title, and be acknowledged the chief proprietary, by ſignal expreſſions of our fealty, and the payment of ſome though inconſiderable quitrent, for our poſſeſſions derived from him: he will rather himſelf be ſeemingly indigent, than permit us to be really ingrateful. For knowing well that our performance of duty and reſpect toward him greatly conduceth to our comfort and happineſs[e], he requireth of us ſuch demonſtrations of them, as

[e] Ἀκήρατος δὲ αὐτῷ ἡ οὐσία καὶ ἀπενδεὴς ὅσα, οὐδενὸς ἐτέρου προσδεῖται· οἱ δὲ αἰνοῦντες αὐτὸν, αὐτοὶ λαμπρότεροι γίνονται. *S. Chryſ. in Pſ.* cxliv. p. 885. *Savil.*

we

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we conveniently are able to exhibit; he appoints ſer- SERM. XVI.
vices expreſſive of thankfulneſs, exacts tributes and
cuſtoms, demands loans and benevolences, encourages
and accepts free-will offerings from us. *Thou ſhalt not* Exod. xxiii.
appear empty before the Lord, was a ſtatute to the 15.
Jews, qualified and moderated by certain meaſures:
the firſt-fruits of their lands, the firſt-born of their
cattle and of themſelves, the tenths of their annual
increaſe, and a certain allotment from the ſpoils ac-
quired in wars, did God challenge to himſelf, as fit-
ting recompences due for his bounty to and care over
them.

Neither did the Gentiles conceive themſelves ex-
empted from the like obligation. For the ἀκροθίνια,
the *top* or *chief of their corn-heaps*, they were wont to
conſecrate unto him who had bleſſed their fields with
increaſe; and the ἀκρόλεια, *the firſt and beſt of the*
prey, they dedicated to the adornment of his temple
by whoſe favourable diſpoſal they had obtained the
victory. Neither would they ſooner begin their
meal, and partake of their neceſſary refreſhment,
than, by pouring forth their gratulatory libation,
they had performed ſome homage to heaven for it.

——αὐδή τις ἔτλη
Πρὶν πιέειν, πρὶν λεῖψαι ὑπερμενεῖ Κρονίωνι, — *Hom. Il. ν.* ad finem.

was the cuſtom, it ſeems, in Homer's time. I ſhall
not inſiſt upon their ἀναθήματα, their anniverſary or
their caſual ſacrifices; but only obſerve, (what, if
ſeaſonable, might by many ſufficient teſtimonies be
evinced,) that thoſe men (at leaſt the moſt intelligent
of them) were not ſo ſenſeleſs as to imagine, that
the Gods, to whom they performed thoſe ſervices,
and devoted thoſe oblations, did any wiſe need, or
were truly benefited by them; but that they
eſteemed it a comely thing, by the moſt ſignifi-
cant means they could invent, to declare their

Vid. *Platonis Alcib.* ii. Οἱ γὰρ, οἶμαι, τοιοῦτόν ἐστι τὸ τῶν θεῶν, ὡς ἐοικὲ δίκαιον παρέχεσθαι, ὃν κακὸν τυγχάνει, &c.

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SERM. XVI. grateful ſenſe of the divine goodneſs and indulgence toward them.

And though we are, perhaps, diſobliged now from the circumſtantial manner, yet are we no wiſe freed from (but rather more ſtrongly engaged to) the ſubſtantial performance of this ſort of gratitude. We are to offer ſtill, not dead *bulls and goats*, but, as Rom. xii. 1. St. Paul ſaith, *our own bodies, living ſacrifices, holy and acceptable to God.* We are excuſed from material, but are yet bound to yield πνευματικὰς θυσίας, *ſpiritual* 1 Pet. ii. 5. *ſacrifices* unto God, as St. Peter tells us. We muſt burn incenſe ſtill, that of fervent devotion; and ſend up continually to heaven θυσίαν τῆς αἰνέσεως, that Heb. xiii. 15. *thank-offering of praiſe*, which the Apoſtle to the Hebrews mentions. We muſt conſecrate the firſt-born of our ſouls, (pure and holy thoughts) and the firſt-fruits of our ſtrength, (our moſt active endeavours) to God's ſervice. We muſt ſlay our impure deſires, mortify our corrupt affections, and abandon our ſelfiſh reſpects for his ſake. We muſt give him our Μία ἀμοιβὴ κυριολάτη παρὰ ἀνθρώπων, ταῦτα δεῖν ἄπτειν ἀρεσκὰ τῷ Θεῷ. *Clem. Alex. Strom.* vii. p. 514. hearts, and preſent our wills entirely to his diſpoſal. We muſt vow to him, and pay the daily oblation of ſincere obedience. We muſt officiouſly attend his pleaſure, and labour to content him by an innocent and unblemiſhed converſation. With theſe things Almighty God is effectually gratified; he approves of and accepts theſe, as real teſtimonies of our thankfulneſs, and competent returns of his benefits.

Eſpecially our charity and beneficence, our exhibiting love and reſpect to good men, (his faithful ſervants and near relations) our affording help and ſuccour to perſons in need and diſtreſs, he accounts a ſuitable retaliation of his kindneſs, acknowledges to be an obligation laid upon himſelf, and hath by ſettled rules and indiſpenſable promiſes obliged himſelf Prov. xix. 17. to requite them. For, *He that hath pity on the poor, lendeth unto the Lord; and that which he hath given, he* Heb. vi. 10. *will pay him again:* and, *God is not unrighteous, to forget*

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SERM. XVI.

get your work and labour of love, which ye have ſhewed toward his name, in that ye have miniſtered to the ſaints, and do miniſter: and, *To do good and to communicate, forget not; for with ſuch ſacrifices God is well pleaſed:* Heb. xiii. 16. and, *I deſire fruit,* ſaith St. Paul to the Philippians, Phil. iv. 17, 18. *that may abound to your account. But I have all, and abound; I am full, having received of Epaphroditus the things which were ſent from you, an odour of a ſweet ſmell, a ſacrifice acceptable, well pleaſing to God.* And, *Inaſmuch as ye have done it to* (that is, fed, and clothed, and comforted,) *the leaſt of theſe my brethren, ye have done it unto me,* ſaith our Saviour; manifeſtly declaring, that the good we do, and the reſpect we ſhew unto good and needy men, God reckons it done unto himſelf. Matt. xxv. 40.

And this point I ſhall conclude with the ſayings of the wiſe Hebrew philoſopher Ben-Sirach, *He that keepeth the law bringeth offerings enough: He that taketh heed to the commandment, offereth a peace-offering. He that requiteth a good turn, offereth fine flower: and he that giveth alms, ſacrificeth praiſe. To depart from wickedneſs is a thing pleaſing to the Lord: and to forſake unrighteouſneſs, is a propitiation.* To theſe I ſhall only add this one particular; Ecclus. xxxv. 1, 2, 3.

7. That true gratitude for benefits is always attended with the eſteem, veneration, and love of the benefactor. Beneficence is a royal and godlike thing, an argument of eminent goodneſs and power conſpiring; and neceſſarily therefore, as in them that perceive and duly conſider it, it begets reſpect and reverence; ſo peculiarly in thoſe that feel its benign influence, it produces love and affection: like the heavenly light, which to all that behold it appears glorious; but more powerfully warms thoſe that are directly ſubject to its rays, and is by them more vigorouſly reflected.

And as to thoſe that are immediately concerned therein, it imports more particular regard and good-will; ſo, if they be duly ſenſible thereof, it engages

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SERM. XVI. them in mutual correſpondence to an extraordinary eſteem and benevolence: ſuch as David upon this account profeſſes to have been in himſelf toward God, and frequently excites others to. *I will love thee, O Lord my ſtrength. I will call upon the Lord, who is worthy to be praiſed. The Lord liveth, and bleſſed be my rock; and let the God of my ſalvation be exalted. I love the Lord, becauſe he hath heard my voice and my ſupplications.* And, (in the Goſpel) *Becauſe her ſins, being many, were forgiven, therefore ſhe loved much.* So true it is, that ſenſe of favour indulged is naturally productive of love.

Pſ. xviii. 1. 3. 46. Pſ. cxvi. 1. Luke vii. 47. Ἔστι χάρις γὰρ τὴν χάριν τίκτουσα. *Soph.*

Thus have I plainly and ſimply preſented you with what my meditations ſuggeſted concerning the nature and ſubſtance of this duty, with the ſeveral branches ſprouting from the main ſtock thereof: I proceed now to that which will exceedingly enlarge the worth, and engage to the performance thereof.

II. The object and term to which it is to be directed; we are to give thanks *to God*. *To God*, I ſay; that is, *to him*, unto whom we are obliged not for ſome ſmall and inconſiderable trifles, but for the moſt weighty and valuable benefits: from whom we receive, not few or ſome, but all good things; whatever is neceſſary for our ſuſtenance, convenient for our uſe, pleaſant for our enjoyment; not only thoſe that come immediately from his hand, but what we obtain from others, who from him receive both the will and the power, the means and the opportunities of doing us good: to whom we owe, not only what we ever did or do at preſent poſſeſs, or can hereafter hope for of good; but that we were, are, or ſhall ever be in capacity to receive any; to the author, upholder, and preſerver of our being; without whoſe goodneſs we had never been, and without whoſe care we cannot ſubſiſt one moment.

To him who is the Lord and true owner of all things we partake of; whoſe air we breathe, whoſe ground we tread on, whoſe food ſuſtains us; whoſe wholly

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wholly we are ourſelves, both the body we carry about us, (which is *the work of his hands*) and the ſoul we think with, which was breathed from his mouth. SERM. XVI.

To him who hath created a whole world to ſerve us, a ſpacious, a beautiful, a ſtately world for us to inhabit and to diſport in; who hath ſubjected ſo fair a territory to our dominion, and conſigned to our uſe ſo numerous a progeny of goodly creatures, to be managed, to be governed, to be enjoyed by us.

So that wherever we direct our eyes, whether we reflect them inward upon ourſelves, we behold his goodneſs to occupy and penetrate the very root and centre of our beings; or extend them abroad toward the things about us, we may perceive ourſelves incloſed wholly, and ſurrounded with his benefits. At home we find a comely body framed by his curious artifice, various organs fitly proportioned, ſituated, and tempered for ſtrength, ornament, and motion, actuated by a gentle heat, and invigorated with lively ſpirits, diſpoſed to health, and qualified for a long endurance; ſubſervient to a ſoul endued with divers ſenſes, faculties, and powers, apt to enquire after, purſue, and perceive various delights and contents. To the ſatisfaction of which all extrinſical things do miniſter matter and help; by his kind diſpoſal, who furniſhes our palates with variety of delicious fare, entertains our eyes with pleaſant ſpectacles, raviſhes our ears with harmonious ſounds, perfumes our noſtrils with fragrant odours, cheers our ſpirits with comfortable gales, *fills our hearts with food and gladneſs*, ſupplies our manifold needs, and protects us from innumerable dangers.

To him who hath inſpired us with immortal minds, and impreſſed upon them perſpicuous characters of his own divine eſſence; hath made us, not in ſome ſuperficial lineaments, but in our moſt intimate conſtitution, to reſemble himſelf, and to partake of his

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SERM. XVI. moſt excellent perfections; an extenſive knowledge of truth, a vehement complacency in good, a forward capacity of being completely happy, (according to our degree, and within our ſphere.) To which bleſſed end by all ſuitable means (of external miniſtry and interior aſſiſtance) he faithfully conducts us; revealing to us the way, urging us in our proceſs, reclaiming us when we deviate; engaging us by his commands, ſoliciting us by gentle advices, encouraging us by gracious promiſes; inſtructing us by his holy word, and admoniſhing us by his loving ſpirit.

To him who vouchſafes to grant us a free acceſs unto, a conſtant intercourſe and a familiar acquaintance with himſelf; to eſteem and ſtyle us his *friends* and *children*; to invite us frequently, and entertain us kindly with thoſe moſt pleaſant delicacies of ſpiritual repaſt; yea, to viſit us often at our home, and (if we admit) to abide and dwell with us; indulging us the enjoyment of that preſence, wherein the life of all joy and comfort conſiſts, and to behold the light of his all-cheering countenance.

Is there any thing more? Yes: *To him* who, to redeem us from miſery, and to advance our eſtate, hath infinitely debaſed himſelf, and eclipſed the brightneſs of his glorious majeſty; not diſdaining to aſſume us into a near affinity, yea, into a perfect union with himſelf; to inhabit our frail and mortal nature, to undergo the laws and conditions of humanity, to appear in our ſhape, and converſe, as it were, upon equal terms with us, and at laſt to taſte the bitter cup of a moſt painful and diſgraceful death for us.

Yea, *to him* who not only deſcended from his imperial throne, became a ſubject, and (which is more) a ſervant for our ſake; but deſigned thereby to exalt us to a participation of his royal dignity, his divine nature, his eternal glory and bliſs; ſubmitting crowns

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crowns and ſceptres to our choice; crowns that can- SERM. not fade, and ſceptres that can never be extorted XVI. from us.

Farther yet, *To him*, the excellent quality, the noble end, the moſt obliging manner of whoſe beneficence doth ſurpaſs the matter thereof, and hugely augment the benefits; who, not compelled by any neceſſity, not obliged by any law, (or previous compact) not induced by any extrinſic arguments, not inclined by our merits, not wearied with our importunities, not inſtigated by troubleſome paſſions of pity, ſhame, or fear, (as we are wont to be,) not flattered with promiſes of recompence, nor bribed with expectation of emolument, thence to accrue unto himſelf; but being abſolute maſter of his own actions, only both lawgiver and counſellor to himſelf, all-ſufficient, and incapable of admitting any acceſſion to his perfect bliſsfulneſs; moſt willingly and freely, out of pure bounty and good-will, is our Friend and Benefactor; preventing not only our deſires, but our knowledge; ſurpaſſing not our deſerts only, but our wiſhes, yea, even our conceits, in the diſpenſation of his ineſtimable and unrequitable benefits; having no other drift in the collation of them, beſide our real good and welfare, our profit and advantage, our pleaſure and content.

To him who not lately began, or ſuddenly will ceaſe, that is either uncertain or mutable in his intentions, but from everlaſting deſigned, continues daily, and will (if we ſuffer him) to all eternity perſevere unmoveable in his reſolutions to do us good.

To him whom no ingratitude, no undutiful carriage, no rebellious diſobedience of ours, could for one minute wholly remove, or divert from his ſteady purpoſe of caring for us: who regards us, though we do not attend to him; procures our welfare, though we neglect his concernments; employs his reſtleſs thought, extends his watchful eye, exerts his powerful arm, is always mindful, and always buſy to

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SERM. XVI. do us good; watching over us when we ſleep, and remembering us when we forget ourſelves: in whom yet 'tis infinite condeſcenſion to think of us, who are placed ſo far beneath his thoughts; to value us, who are but duſt and dirt; not to deſpiſe and hate us, who are really ſo deſpicable and unworthy. For

Pſ. cxiii. 5, 6. *though he dwelleth on high,* ſaith the Pſalmiſt truly and emphatically, *he humbleth himſelf to behold the things that are done in heaven and earth.*

To him that is as merciful and gracious, as liberal and munificent toward us; that not only beſtows on us more gifts, but pardons us more debts, and forgives us more ſins, than we live minutes; that with infinite patience endures, not only our manifold infirmities and imperfections, but our petulant follies, our obſtinate perverſeneſſes, our treacherous infidelities; overlooks our careleſs neglects and our wilful miſcarriages; puts up the exceedingly many outrageous affronts, injuries, and contumelies continually offered to his ſupreme Majeſty by us baſe worms, whom he hath always under his feet, and can cruſh to nothing at his pleaſure.

Jam. i. 5. *To him* yet, who, as St. James ſaith, *giveth freely, and upbraideth no man*; who calls us neither very frequently nor over ſtrictly to accounts; who exacts of us no impoſſible, no very difficult, no greatly-burdenſome or coſtly returns; being ſatisfied with the cheerful acceptance of his favours, the hearty acknowledgments of his goodneſs, the ſincere performance of ſuch duties, to which our own welfare, comfort, and advantage (rightly apprehended) would otherwiſe abundantly diſpoſe us.

To him, laſtly, whoſe benefits to acknowledge is the greateſt benefit of all; to be enabled to thank whom deſerves our greateſt thanks; to be ſenſible of whoſe beneficence, to meditate on whoſe goodneſs, to admire whoſe excellency, to celebrate whoſe praiſe, is heaven itſelf and paradiſe, the life of angels, the quinteſſence of joy, the ſupreme degree of felicity.

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In a word, *To him* whoſe benefits are immenſely great, innumerably many, unexpreſſibly good and precious. For, *Who can utter the mighty acts of the Lord? who can ſhew forth all his praiſe?* ſaid he, who had employed often his moſt active thoughts and his utmoſt endeavours thereupon, and was incomparably better able to do it. SERM. XVI. Pſ. cvi. 2.

To this God, to this great, to this only Benefactor of ours, we owe this moſt natural and eaſy, this moſt juſt and equal, this moſt ſweet and pleaſant duty of giving thanks. To whom if we wilfully refuſe, if we careleſsly neglect to pay it, I ſhall only ſay thus much, that we are not only monſtrouſly ingrateful, and horribly wicked; but abominably fooliſh, and deplorably miſerable. I ſhall repeat this ſentence once again, and wiſh it may have its due effect upon us: To this great, to this only Patron and Benefactor of ours, if we do not in ſome meaſure diſcharge our due debt of gratitude for his ineſtimable benefits and mercies, we are to be adjudged not only moſt prodigiouſly unthankful, moſt deteſtably impious, but moſt wofully ſtupid alſo and ſenſeleſs, moſt deſperately wretched and unhappy.

I ſhould now proceed to conſider the circumſtance of time determined in the word *always*; and the extenſion of the matter, implied in thoſe words, *for all things*: and then to ſubjoin ſome farther inducements or arguments perſuaſive to the practice of this duty. But the time (and, I fear, your patience) failing, I ſhall reſerve them to ſome other opportunity.

SERMON

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SERMON XVII.

Of the Duty of Thankſgiving.

EPHES. v. 20.

Giving thanks always for all things unto God.

HAVING formerly diſcourſed upon theſe words, I obſerved in them four particulars conſiderable: 1. The ſubſtance of a duty, to which we are exhorted, to *give thanks*; 2. The term unto which it is directed, *to God*; 3. The circumſtance of time determined in that word *always*; 4. The extent of the matter about which the duty is employed, *for all things*. Concerning the two former particulars, wherein the duty conſiſted, and wherefore eſpecially related unto God, I then repreſented what did occur to my meditation. SERM. XVII.

III. I proceed now to the third, the circumſtance of time allotted to the performance of this duty, expreſſed by that univerſal and unlimited term, *always*.

Which yet is not ſo to be underſtood, as if thereby we were obliged in every inſtant (or ſingular point of time) actually to remember, to conſider, to be affected with, and to acknowledge the divine benefits: for the deliberate operations of our minds being

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SERM. XVII.

ing ſometimes wholly interrupted by ſleep, otherwhile preoccupied by the indiſpenſable care of ſerving our natural neceſſities, and with attendance upon other reaſonable employments, it were impoſſible to comply with an obligation to the performance of this duty ſo interpreted. And thoſe maxims of law, *Impoſſibilium nulla eſt obligatio*, and, *Quæ rerum natura prohibentur, nulla lege confirmata ſunt*, (that is, *No law or precept can oblige to impoſſibilities*,) being evidently grounded upon natural equity, ſeem yet more valid, in relation to his laws, who is the Judge of all the world, and in his diſpenſations moſt tranſcendently juſt and equal.

We may therefore obſerve, that the Hebrews are wont (in way of ſynecdoche, or grammatical hyperbole) ſo to uſe words of this kind, that their univerſal importance ought to be reſtrained by the quality or circumſtances of the matter about which they converſe. As when our Saviour ſaith, *Ye ſhall be hated of all men for my ſake*; *All* is not to be taken for every ſingular perſon, (ſince there were ſome that loved our Saviour, and embraced the evangelical doctrine,) but for many, or the moſt. And when David ſaith, *There is none that doeth good*; he ſeemeth only to mean, that in the general corruption of his times there were few righteous perſons to be found. And ſo *for ever* is often uſed, not for a perpetual and endleſs, but for a long and laſting duration; and *always*, not for a continual, unintermitted, ſtate of being, or action, but for ſuch a perſeverance as agrees to the condition of the thing to which it is applied.

Matt. x. 22.

Pſ. xiv. 1.

Exod. xxviii. 30.

'Tis, for inſtance, preſcribed in Exodus, that Aaron ſhould *bear the judgment of the children of Iſrael* (the Urim and Thummim) *upon his heart before the Lord continually*; that is, (not in abſolute and rigorous acceptation continually, but) conſtantly ever when he went into the holy place to diſcharge the pontifical function, as the context declares. And

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our Saviour in the Goſpel ſaith of himſelf, Ἐγὼ πάντοτε ἐδίδαξα, *I always taught in the temple*; that is, very often, and ever when fit occaſion was preſented. SERM. XVII.

And the Apoſtles, immediately after Chriſt's aſcenſion, ἦσαν διαπαντὸς ἐν τῷ ἱερῷ, *were*, as St. Luke tells us, *continually in the temple, praiſing and bleſſing God*; that is, they reſorted thither conſtantly at the uſual times or canonical hours of prayer. In like manner thoſe injunctions (of neareſt affinity) of *rejoicing*, of *giving thanks always*, and particularly of *praying without ceaſing*, (as I have ſhewn more largely in another diſcourſe) are to be taken in a ſenſe ſo qualified, that the obſervance of them may be at leaſt morally poſſible. John xviii. 20. Luke xxiv. 53. 1 Theſſ. v. 16, 17, 18. Eph. vi. 18. Luke xviii. 1.

Thus far warrantably we may limit the extenſion and mollify the rigour of this ſeemingly boundleſs term: but we can hardly allow any farther reſtriction, without deſtroying the natural ſignification, or diminiſhing the due emphaſis thereof. As far therefore as it is poſſible for us, we muſt endeavour always to perform this duty of gratitude to Almighty God: and conſequently,

1. Hereby is required a frequent performance thereof; that we do often actually meditate upon, be ſenſible of, confeſs and celebrate the divine beneficence. For what is done but ſeldom or never, (as we commonly ſay) cannot be underſtood done always, without a *catachreſis*, or abuſe of words too enormous. As therefore no moment of our life wants ſufficient matter, and every conſiderable portion of time miniſters notable occaſion of bleſſing God; as he allows himſelf no ſpacious intervals or diſcontinuances of doing us good: ſo ought we not to ſuffer any of thoſe many days (vouchſafed by his goodneſs) to flow beſide us, void of the ſignal expreſſions of our dutiful thankfulneſs to him; nor to admit in our courſe of life any long vacations from this duty. If God inceſſantly, and through every minute, demonſtrates himſelf gracious unto us; we

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SERM. XVII. in all reaſon are obliged frequently and daily to declare ourſelves grateful unto him.

So at leaſt did David (that moſt eminent example in this kind, and therefore moſt appoſite to illuſtrate our doctrine, and to enforce the practice thereof); Pſ. cxlv. 2. for, *Every day*, ſaith he, *I will bleſs thee; I will praiſe thy name for ever and ever. Every day.* The heavenly bodies did not more conſtantly obſerve their courſe, than he his diurnal revolutions of praiſe: every day in his calendar was as it were feſtival, and conſecrated to thankſgiving. Neither did he adjudge it ſufficient to devote ſome ſmall parcels of each day to Pſ. xxxv. 28. this ſervice: for, *My tongue*, ſaith he, *ſhall ſpeak of thy righteouſneſs and of thy praiſe all the day long:* and Pſ. lxxi. 8. 15. 24. again, *My mouth ſhall ſhew forth thy righteouſneſs and thy ſalvation all the day, for I know not the numbers thereof.* The benefits of God he apprehended ſo great and numerous, that no definite ſpace of time would ſerve to conſider and commemorate them. He reſolves therefore otherwhere to beſtow his whole Pſ. cxlvi. 2. civ. 33. xxxiv. 1. lxxi. 6. life upon that employment: *While I live I will praiſe the Lord: I will ſing praiſes unto my God while I have any being:* and, *I will bleſs the Lord at all times; his praiſe ſhall continually be in my mouth.* No man can reaſonably pretend greater impediments, or oftener avocations from the practice of this duty, than he, upon whom the burden of a royal eſtate, and the care of governing a populous nation, were incumbent: yet could not they thruſt out of his memory, nor extinguiſh in his heart, the lively ſenſe of divine goodneſs; which (notwithſtanding the company of other ſecular encumbrances) was always preſent to his mind, and, like a ſpirit, (excluded from no place by any corporeal reſiſtance) did mingle with and penetrate all his thoughts, and affections, and actions. So that he ſeems to have approached very near to the complete performance of this duty, according to the extremity of a literal interpretation, and to have been always, without any intermiſſion, employed in giving

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giving thanks to God. The conſideration, methinks, of ſo noble a pattern, adjoined to the evident reaſonableneſs of the duty, ſhould engage us to the frequent practice thereof [a].

But if the conſideration of this excellent example do not, yet certainly that may both provoke us to emulation, and confound us with ſhame, of Epictetus, a heathen man, whoſe words to this purpoſe ſeem very remarkable: Εἰ γὰρ νῦν εἴχομεν, ſaith he in Arrian's Diſſert. Lib. i. cap. 17. ἄλλο τι ἔδει ἡμᾶς ποιεῖν, καὶ κοινῇ, καὶ ἰδίᾳ, ἢ ὑμνεῖν τὸ θεῖον, καὶ εὐφημεῖν, καὶ ἐπεξέρχεσθαι τὰς χάριτας; ἐκ ἔδει καὶ σκάπτοντας, καὶ ἀρῶντας, καὶ ἐσθίοντας ᾄδειν τὸν ὕμνον τὸν εἰς τὸν Θεόν; Μέγας ὁ Θεὸς, &c. that is in our language, *If we underſtood ourſelves, what other thing ſhould we do, either publicly or privately, than ſing hymns to, and ſpeak well of God, and perform thanks unto him? Ought we not, when we were digging, or ploughing, or eating, to ſing a* (ſuitable) *hymn to him* [b]*? Great is God, in that he hath beſtowed on us thoſe inſtruments wherewith we till the ground: Great is God, becauſe he hath given us hands, a throat, a belly; that we grow inſenſibly, that ſleeping we breathe. Thus* (proceeds he) *ſhould we upon every occurrence celebrate God, and ſuperadd of all the moſt excellent and moſt divine hymn, for that he hath given us the faculty of apprehending and uſing theſe things orderly. Wherefore ſince moſt men are blind and ignorant of this, ſhould there not be ſome one, who ſhould diſcharge this office, and who ſhould for the reſt utter this hymn to God? And what can I, a lame (and decrepit) old man do elſe, than celebrate God? Were I indeed a nightingale, I would do what belongs to a nightingale; if a ſwan, what becomes a ſwan: but ſince now I am endued*

[a] Εἰ δὲ βασιλεὺς ἀνὴρ μυρίαις βαπτιζόμενος φροντίσι, καὶ παυλαχόθεν περιελκόμενος, τοσαυτάκις παρεκάλει τὸν Θεόν· τίνα ἂν ἔχοιμεν ἀπολογίαν ἢ συγγνώμην ἡμεῖς, τοσαύτην σχολὴν ἄγοντες, καὶ μὴ συνεχῶς αὐτὸν ἱκετεύοντες, &c. *Chryſ.* tom. v. p. 76.

[b] Παῦλα τοίνυν ἡ βίου ἑορτὴν ἄγουσιν, φαίην πάντοθεν περιῆναι τὸν Θεὸν πεπεισμένοι, γεωργοῦμεν αἰνοῦντες, πλέομεν ὑμνοῦντες, κατὰ τὴν ἄλλην πολιτείαν εὐθὺς ἀναφερόμεθα. *Clem. Alex. Strom.* vii. p. 517.

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SERM. XVII. *with reaſon, I ought to praiſe God. This is my duty and concernment, and ſo I do; neither will I deſert this employment, while it is in my power: and to the ſame ſong I exhort you all.* Thus that worthy philoſopher, not inſtructing us only, and exhorting with pathetical diſcourſe, but by his practice inciting us to be continually expreſſing our gratitude to God.

And although neither the admonition of prophets, nor precepts of philoſophers, nor the examples of both, ſhould prevail; yet the precedents, methinks, of dumb and ſenſeleſs creatures ſhould animate us thereto; which never ceaſe to obey the law impoſed on them by their Maker, and without intermiſſion glorify him. For, *The heavens declare the glory of God, and the firmament ſheweth his handy-work. Day unto day uttereth ſpeech, and night unto night ſheweth knowledge. There is no ſpeech nor language, where their voice is not heard.* It is St. Chryſoſtom's argumentation.

Pſal. xix. 1, 2, 3.

In Pſ. cxliv. Καὶ γὰρ αἰσχρὸν ἂν εἴη, ſaith he, τὸν λογικὸν ἄνθρωπον, καὶ τῶν ὁρωμένων ἁπάντων τιμιώτερον, ἔλαττον τῆς κτίσεως φέρειν κατὰ τὸν τῆς εὐφημίας λόγον· οὐκ αἰσχρὸν δὲ μόνον, ἀλλὰ καὶ ἄτοπον, &c. *It were an ugly thing, that man, endued with reaſon, and the moſt honourable of all things viſible, ſhould in rendering thanks and praiſe be exceeded by other creatures: neither is it only baſe, but abſurd. For how can it be otherwiſe, ſince other creatures every day and every hour ſend up a doxology to their Lord and Maker? For,* The heavens declare the glory of God, &c.

If the buſy heavens are always at leiſure, and the ſtupid earth is perpetually active in manifeſting the wiſdom, power, and goodneſs of their Creator; how ſhameful is it, that we (the flower of his creation, the moſt obliged, and moſt capable of doing it,) ſhould commonly be either too buſy, or too idle to do it; ſhould ſeldom or never be diſpoſed to contribute our endeavours to the advancement of his glory? But,

2. *Giving thanks always* may import our appointing, and punctually obſerving, certain convenient times of performing this duty; that is, of ſerious meditation

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tation upon, and affectionate acknowledgment of the divine bounty. We know that all perſons, who deſign with advantage to proſecute an orderly courſe of action, and would not lead a tumultuary life, are wont to diſtinguiſh their portions of time, aſſigning ſome to the neceſſary refections of their body, others to the divertiſement of their minds, and a great part to the diſpatch of their ordinary buſineſs: otherwiſe (like St. James's *double-minded man*) they would be *unſtable in all their ways*; they would ever fluctuate in their reſolutions, and be uncertain when, and how, and to what they ſhould apply themſelves. And ſo, this main concernment of ours, this moſt excellent part of our duty, if we do not depute ſome vacant ſeaſons for it, and obſerve ſome periodical recourſes thereof, we ſhall be tempted often to omit it; we ſhall be liſtleſs to do it, apt to defer it, and eaſily diverted from it by the encroachments of other leſs-behoving affairs.

SERM. XVII.

Jam. i. 8.

The Jews, to preſerve them in the conſtant exerciſe of this duty, had inſtituted by God a ſacrifice called תמיד *(jugis)* rendered by the Greek tranſlators ἡ διαπαντὸς θυσία, *the continual ſacrifice*; to which the divine author of the Epiſtle to the Hebrews ſeems to allude, when in theſe words he exhorts: Δι' αὐτοῦ οὖν ἀναφέρωμεν θυσίαν αἰνέσεως διαπαντὸς τῷ Θεῷ· *By him therefore let us offer the ſacrifice of praiſe to God continually*, (or the continual ſacrifice of praiſe) *the fruit of our lips, giving thanks to his name.* As that ſacrifice therefore, being offered conſtantly at a ſet time, was thence denominated *continual*; ſo perhaps may we, by conſtantly obſerving ſome fit returns of praiſe and thankſgiving, be ſaid *always* to *give thanks.*

Dan. viii. 11.

Heb. xiii. 15.

In determining the ſeaſons and proportions of which, what other rule or ſtandard can we better conform to, than that of the royal Prophet: I ſhall not urge his example ſo much; (according to which we ſhould be obliged to a greater frequency;) for, *Seven times a day*, ſaith he, *do I praiſe thee, becauſe of thy righteous*

Pſ. cxix. 64.

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SERM. XVII. *judgments:* but rather alledge his general direction and opinion, propoſed to us in thoſe words of his; ——— *It is a good thing to give thanks unto the Lord, and to ſing praiſes unto thy name, O thou Moſt High; to ſhew forth thy loving-kindneſs every morning, and thy faithfulneſs every night. It is a good thing*; that is, a ſeemly, a convenient, a commendable, a due performance: *every morning*; that is, when our ſpirits, being recreated with ſleep, are become more vigorous, our memories more freſh, our fancies more quick and active: *to ſhew forth thy loving-kindneſs*; that is, from a hearty ſenſe of our obligation, to acknowledge the free bounty of him, who, in purſuance of his former kindneſs, hath been pleaſed to accumulate new favours on us: to guard us by his watchful care, when we were buried, as it were, in a ſenſeleſs ignorance, and total neglect of our own welfare; to raiſe us from that temporary death, and to confer a new life upon us, reſtoring us to our health, to our means of ſubſiſtence, to all the neceſſary ſupports, and the deſirable comforts of life: *every night* alſo; that is, when our ſpirits are exhauſted with action, and our minds tired with thoughtfulneſs; when we are become weary, not of doing only, but almoſt of being; we ſhould conclude our toils, and wrap up our cares in the ſweet ſenſe and grateful memory of his goodneſs, who hath protected us ſo many hours from the manifold dangers, and more ſins, to which, by our weakneſs, and our folly, and our bad inclinations, we are through every minute expoſed; and withal hath provided us ſo eaſy and ſo delightful a means of recovering our ſpent activity, of repairing our decayed ſtrength.

Pſ. xcii. 1, 2. lv. 17.

Thus if we conſtantly begin, and thus cloſe up, thus bound and circumſcribe our days, dedicating thoſe moſt remarkable periods of time to bleſſing God, and *making* (as the Pſalmiſt ſpeaks) *the outgoings of the morning and evening to rejoice* in him; (ſince beginning and ending do in a manner comprehend the whole; and the morning and evening, in Moſes's computation

Pſ. lxv. 8.

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tation and ſtyle, do conſtitute a day;) we may (not incongruouſly) be ſuppoſed and ſaid to *give thanks always*. But yet farther, this may import, SERM. XVII.

3. A vigilant attendance upon this duty, ſuch as men beſtow on their employments, whereof though the actual proſecution ceaſes, yet the deſign continually proceeds. As we ſay, ſuch a one is writing a book, building a houſe, occupying a piece of land, though he be at that preſent peradventure ſleeping, or eating, or ſatisfying ſome other deſire; becauſe his deſign never ſleeps, and his purpoſe perſiſts uninterrupted. And thus, it ſeems, we are to underſtand our Saviour and the Apoſtles, when they exhort us προσκαρτερεῖν, *to continue inſtant in prayer and thankſgiving*; and ἀγρυπνεῖν ἐν πάσῃ προσκαρτερήσει, to *watch with all perſeverance*; and γρηγορεῖν, to *wake in thankſgiving*; and μὴ παύεσθαι, *not to give over giving thanks*: and, to perform theſe duties ἀδιαλείπτως, *inceſſantly*, or *without giving off*; μὴ ἐκκακεῖν, *not to grow worſe, faint*, or *faulter*: (which is, in that place, made equivalent to, explicatory of doing duty always.) Which expreſſions denote a moſt diligent attendance on theſe duties; that we make them not a πάρεργον, a diverſion or by-buſineſs of our lives, allowing only a perfunctory and deſultorious endeavour on them; but eſteem them a weighty buſineſs, to be purſued with ſteadfaſt reſolution, and unwearied induſtry.

Rom. xii. 12. Eph. vi. 18. Col. iv. 2. Eph. i. 16. 1 Theſſ. v. 17. Luke xviii. 1.

As our beings and powers did proceed from the goodneſs, ſo the reſults of them naturally tend to the glory of God; and the deliberations of our will ought to conſpire with the inſtincts of our nature; it ſhould be the principal deſign which our intention ſhould aim at, and our endeavour always drive on, to glorify our Maker. Which doing, we may be reputed to diſcharge this duty, and in ſome ſenſe ſaid *always to give thanks*. But farther,

4. This term [*always*] doth neceſſarily imply a ready diſpoſition, or habitual inclination to give thanks, ever permanent in us: that our *hearts*, as

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SERM. XVII. David's was, be *fixed* always (that is, fittingly prepared, and ſteadily reſolved) to thank and *praiſe* God; that our affections be like tinder, though not always inflamed, yet eaſily inflammable by the ſenſe of his goodneſs.

Pſ. cviii. 1.

Pſ. xxxvii. 26. 'Tis ſaid of the righteous man, that *he is ever merciful, and lendeth:* not for that he doth ever actually diſpenſe alms, or furniſh his poor neighbour with ſupplies: but becauſe his mind is ever inclinable to do it, when need requires. So a grateful man doth *always give thanks*, by being diſpoſed to do it upon all fit occaſions. 'Tis the habit that qualifies and denominates a man ſuch or ſuch in any kind or degree of morality. A good man is in Scripture frequently compared to a *tree bringing forth fruit in due ſeaſon*; and the root thereof is this habitual diſpoſition, which being nouriſhed by the dew of heaven, and quickened by the benign influence of divine grace, ſprouts forth opportunely, and yields a plentiful increaſe of good fruit. Though we cannot always ſing, our organs may be always rightly tuned for praiſe; at leaſt they ſhould never be unſtrung, and wholly out of kelter.

We ſhould maintain in ourſelves a conſtant good temper of mind, that no opportunity ſurpriſe, and find us unprepared to entertain worthily the effects of divine favour; otherwiſe we ſhall as well loſe the benefit, as God the thanks and glory due to them. That we be always thus diſpoſed, is not impoſſible, and therefore requiſite. But moreover,

5. Laſtly, *Giving thanks* imports, that we readily embrace every opportunity of actually expreſſing our thankfulneſs. For ſo, what in ſome places of Scripture is enjoined to be done *continually*, and *without ceaſing*, is in others only required to be done upon all opportunities. Which ſhews, that πάντοτε is to be expounded, not ſo much ἐν παντὶ χρόνῳ, *at all times*,

Eph. vi. 18. as ἐν παντὶ καιρῷ, *in every ſeaſon*. So προσευχόμενοι ἐν παντὶ καιρῷ ἐν πνεύματι, *praying upon every opportunity in*

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in your ſpirit: and, Ἀγρυπνεῖτε οὖν ἐν παντὶ καιρῷ δεόμενοι, *Be watchful, praying in every ſeaſon.* And this ſenſe ſeems probably to be chiefly intended by this Apoſtle, whenever he hath (as he hath often) this expreſſion, πάντοτε εὐχαριστεῖν, that we embrace every overture or fit occaſion of giving thanks. SERM. XVII. Luke xxi. 36.

'Tis true, no time is unſeaſonable to do it: every moment we receive favours, and therefore every minute we owe thanks: yet there are ſome eſpecial ſeaſons, that do more importunately require them. We ſhould be like thoſe trees, that bear fruit (more or leſs) continually; but then more kindly, and more abundantly, when more powerfully cheriſhed by the heavenly warmth.

When any freſh, any rare, any remarkable benefit happens to us; when proſperous ſucceſs attends our honeſt endeavours; when unexpected favours fall as it were of their own accord into our boſoms; (like the grain in the golden age ſpringing ἄσπαρτα καὶ ἀνήροτα, without our care, or our toil, for our uſe and enjoyment;) when we are delivered from ſtraits in our apprehenſion inextricable, ſurmount difficulties ſeeming inſuperable, eſcape hazards (as we ſuſpected) inevitable: then is a ſpecial ſeaſon preſented us of offering up the ſacrifice of praiſe to the God of mercy, help, and victory.

When we revolve in our minds (as we ſhould often do) the favourable paſſages of providence, that in the whole courſe of our lives have befallen us: how in our extreme poverty and diſtreſs (when, perhaps no help appeared, and all hopes ſeemed to fail us,) God hath raiſed us up friends, who have commiſerated, comforted, and ſuccoured us; and not only ſo, but hath changed our ſorrowful condition into a ſtate of joy; hath (to uſe the Pſalmiſt's expreſſions) *turned our mourning into dancing*; hath *put off our ſackcloth, and girded us with gladneſs*; hath *conſidered our trouble, and known our ſoul in adverſity*; hath *ſet our feet in a large room*, and furniſhed us with plentiful Pſ. xxx. 11. Pſ. xxxi. 7, 8.

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means of ſubſiſtence: how in the various changes, and adventures, and travels of our life, upon ſea and land, at home and abroad, among friends, and ſtrangers, and enemies, he hath protected us from wants and dangers; from devouring diſeaſes, and the diſtemperatures of infectious air; from the aſſaults of bloody thieves and barbarous pirates; from the rage of fire, and fury of tempeſts; from diſaſtrous caſualties; from treacherous ſurpriſes; from open miſchiefs, that with a dreadful face approached and threatened our deſtruction: then moſt opportunely ſhould we with all thankful exultation of mind admire and celebrate *our ſtrength, and our deliverer*; our faithful *refuge in trouble*, and *the rock of our ſalvation.*

Alſo when the ordinary effects of divine providence do in any advantageous manner preſent themſelves to our view; when we peruſe the volumes of ſtory, and therein obſerve the various events of human action; eſpecially the ſeaſonable rewards of virtue, the notable protections and deliverances of innocence, and the unexpected puniſhments of malicious wickedneſs: then we ſhould with thankful acclamations celebrate the divine goodneſs and juſtice; joining in concert with that heavenly choir, and ſaying, *Hallelujah*; *ſalvation, and glory, and honour, and power unto the Lord our God: for true and righteous are his judgments.*

Apoc. xix. 1, 2.

Or when we contemplate the wonderful works of nature, and, walking about at our leiſure, gaze upon this ample theatre of the world, conſidering the ſtately beauty, conſtant order, and ſumptuous furniture thereof; the glorious ſplendor and uniform motion of the heavens; the pleaſant fertility of the earth; the curious figure and fragrant ſweetneſs of plants; the exquiſite frame of animals; and all other amazing miracles of nature, wherein the glorious attributes of God (eſpecially his tranſcendent goodneſs) are moſt conſpicuouſly diſplayed; (ſo that by them not only large acknowledgments, but even gratulatory

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tulatory hymns, as it were, of praiſe have been extorted from the mouths of Ariſtotle, Pliny, Galen, and ſuch like men, never ſuſpected guilty of an exceſſive devotion;) then ſhould our hearts be affected with thankful ſenſe, and our lips break forth into his praiſe. SERM. XVII.

Yea, from every object of ſenſe, from every event of providence, from every common occurrence, we may extract fit matter of thankſgiving: as did our Saviour, when, conſidering the ſtupid infidelity of thoſe proud people of Chorazin, Bethſaida, and Capernaum, (who were not at all affected by his miraculous works, nor moved to repentance by his pathetical diſcourſes,) and comparing it with the pious credulity of his meaner diſciples, he brake forth into that divine ejaculation; *I thank thee, O Father, Lord of heaven and earth, that thou haſt concealed theſe things from the wiſe and prudent, and haſt revealed them unto babes.* Ἐν ἐκείνῳ τῷ καιρῷ ἀποκριθεὶς Ἰησοῦς εἶπε, ſaith the evangelical narration; *Upon that occaſion Jeſus thus ſpake:* he embraced that convenient opportunity of thankfully acknowledging God's wiſe and gracious diſpenſation. And frequent occaſion is afforded us daily (were our minds ſuitably diſpoſed) of doing the like. Luke x. 21.

But ſo much concerning the time of performing this duty.

IV. We proceed to the matter thereof, *for all things.* St. Chryſoſtom (in his Commentary upon the 145th Pſalm) having enumerated ſeveral particulars for which we are bound to thank God; "Becauſe," (I recite his words punctually rendered) "Becauſe, ſaith he, he hath made us, who before "had no being, and made us ſuch as we are; becauſe he upholds us being made, and takes care of "us continually, both publicly and privately, ſecretly and openly, with and without our knowledge; "for all viſible things created for our ſake, the miniſtry of them afforded to us; the conformation

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SERM. XVII. " of our bodies, the nobleneſs of our ſouls; his daily " diſpenſations by miracles, by laws, by puniſh- " ments; his various and incomprehenſible provi- " dence; for the chief of all, that he hath not ſpared " his only-begotten Son for our ſake; the benefits " conferred on us by baptiſm, and the other holy " myſteries, (or ſacraments;) the ineffable good " things to be beſtowed on us hereafter, the king- " dom of heaven, the reſurrection, the enjoyment of " perfect bliſs;" having, I ſay, in theſe words compriſed the things for which we are obliged to thank and praiſe God, he thus deſpondently concludes: (Ἂν γὰρ ἕκαστόν τις τούτων κατανέγκῃ, εἰς πέλαγος ἄφατον ἐμπεσεῖται εὐεργεσιῶν, καὶ ὄψεται πόσων ἐστὶν ὑπεύθυνος τῷ Θεῷ.) " If any one ſhall endeavour to recount parti- " cularly every one of theſe things, he will but " plunge himſelf into an unexpreſſible deep of bene- " fits, and then perceive for how unexpreſſibly and " inconceivably many good things he ſtands engaged " to God." And to the like *non plus* doth the devout Pſalmiſt ſeem to be reduced, when he thus exclaims, *How precious are thy thoughts unto me, O God! how great is the ſum of them! If I ſhould count them, they are more in number than the ſand.*

Pſ. cxxxix. 17, 18. xxxvi. 5, 6, 7.

I ſhall not therefore confound myſelf by launching too far into this immenſe ocean, nor ſtrive minutely to compute the incomprehenſible ſum of the divine benefits; but only obſerve, that in groſs, according to our Apoſtle's calculation, all things, which however happen to us, are ingredients thereof. No occurrence (great or ſmall, common or particular, preſent or paſt, pleaſant or ſad, perpetual or tranſitory) is excluded from being the ſubject of our thankſgiving: each one may prove beneficial to us; and we are with a cheerful contentedneſs and a grateful reſentment to receive them all from God's hand. But to obſerve ſome little diſtinction: I ſay,

1. We are to give thanks, not only for great and notable benefits, but for the leaſt and moſt ordinary fa-

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favours of God: though indeed none of God's favours are in themſelves ſmall and inconſiderable. Men are wont to bleſs themſelves, if they receive but a tranſient glance from a prince's eye; a ſmile from a great perſonage; any ſlender intimation of regard from him that is in capacity to do them good. What is it then to receive the leaſt teſtimony of his good-will, from whom alone every good thing can be expected; upon whoſe diſpoſal all happy ſucceſs of our wiſhes, our hopes, and our endeavours do entirely depend! We repute him unjuſt, who withholds the leaſt part of what is due from the true owner: and is not he ungrateful then, that omits to render thanks for the leaſt of divine mercies? SERM. XVII.

There is one glory of the ſun, another of the moon, another of the ſtars, ſaith St. Paul. Some works of God indeed excel in luſtre; yet all are glorious, all are to be diſcerned, all to be eſteemed and thankfully entertained by us. The brightneſs of the one ſhould not wholly obſcure the other; if it do, it argues the weakneſs of our ſenſe, the dulneſs of our ſpiritual faculty. For every beam of light that delights our eye, for every breath of air that cheers our ſpirits, for every drop of pleaſant liquor that cools our thirſt, for every minute of comfortable repoſe, for every ſtep we ſafely take, for the happy iſſue of the leaſt undertaking, for eſcaping the vengeance due to an idle word or a wanton thought, we owe a hymn of praiſe to God. But, 1 Cor. xv. 41.

2. We are to render thanks, not only for new and preſent benefits, but for all we have formerly, all that we may hereafter receive. We find David not only frequently acknowledging the gracious diſpenſations of providence toward him through the whole courſe of his life, but looking back in his thankful devotions as far as his very original being, and praiſing God for favours conferred on him beyond his memory, yea before his life. *I will praiſe thee*, ſaith he, *for I am fearfully and wonderfully made: marvelous* Pſ. cxxxix. 14, 15, 16.

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lous are thy works, and that my ſoul knoweth right well. My ſubſtance was not hid from thee, when I was made in ſecret, and curiouſly wrought in the lower parts of the earth. Thine eyes did ſee my ſubſtance yet being imperfect, and in thy book all my members were written, which in continuance were faſhioned, when as yet there was none of them. And St. Paul, yet farther reflecting his grateful conſideration, bleſſes God for his favour commenced before the beginning of things. *Bleſſed,* ſaith he, *be God and the Father of our Lord Jeſus Chriſt, who hath bleſſed us with all ſpiritual bleſſings in heavenly places in Chriſt, according as he hath choſen us before the foundation of the world.*

Eph. i. 3, 4.

Neither doth the memory only of former, and the enjoyment of preſent, but the hope and foreſight alſo of future bleſſings worthily claim our thanks. For, ſaith St. Peter, *Bleſſed be God and the Father of our Lord Jeſus Chriſt, which, according to his abundant mercy, hath begotten us again unto a lively hope by the reſurrection of Jeſus Chriſt from the dead: to an inheritance incorruptible and undefiled, reſerved in heaven for you.* Beaſts only, and men not much better than they, are affected with preſent good turns: but men of honeſt and generous temper reſent indifferently the obligations of all times. Senſe doth not confine their gratitude, nor abſence remove, nor age wear it out. What once is done, is ever done to them; and what of courteſy is purpoſed, ſeems to them performed. But having before diſcourſed ſomewhat largely concerning the remembrance of benefits, I leave this point. Furthermore,

1 Pet. i. 3, 4.

3. We ſhould bleſs God, not only for new, rare, extraordinary accidents of providence, but for the common and daily benefits and indulgences thereof. Theſe favours are uſually the greateſt and moſt valuable in their own nature. (For what can be imagined of higher conſequence to us, than the preſervation of our lives and of our eſtates, by which they are comfortably maintained; than the continuance of

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of our bodies in good health, and our minds in their right wits; than the knowledge of heavenly truth, the encouragements to virtue and piety, the aſſiſtances of divine grace, and the promiſes of eternal bliſs continually exhibited to us[c]?) Shall the commonneſs and continuance of theſe exceeding favours, that they are not given us once only, and tranſitorily, but continued, (that is, given us ſo often as time hath inſtants) and with an uninterrupted perſeverance renewed unto us; ſhall this abate and enervate our gratitude, which in all reaſon ſhould mainly increaſe and confirm it? But this point I alſo touched before, and therefore, forbearing to inſiſt thereon, I proceed. SERM. XVII.

4. We ſhould give thanks, not only for private and particular, but for public benefits alſo, and for ſuch as befall others. *I exhort therefore*, ſaith St. Paul, *before all things, that ſupplications, prayers, interceſſions and thankſgivings be made for all men*: not *prayers* only, for good things to be beſtowed on others; but *thankſgivings* alſo, for the benefits received by others. (And ὑπὲρ πάντων in our text, however otherwiſe commonly interpreted, may well admit this ſenſe alſo; and be taken indifferently, *pro omnibus*, *for all perſons*, and *propter omnia*, *for all things*.) 1 Tim. ii. 1.

We are all citizens of the world, and concerned in its good conſtitution; and thence obliged thankfully to adore the mighty Upholder and wiſe Governor thereof, praiſing him for all the general benefits liberally poured forth upon mankind. We partake in the commodities of civil ſociety; and therefore ſhould heartily thank him, by whoſe gracious diſpoſal order is maintained, peace continued, juſtice adminiſtered, Vid. Chryſ. in 2 Cor. Or. 2.

[c] Quem vero aſtrorum ordines, quem dierum noctiumque viciſſitudines, quem menſium temperatio, quemque ea quæ nobis gignuntur ad fruendum non gratum eſſe cogant; hunc hominem omnino numerare quî decet? *Cic. de Leg.* ii.

plenty

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SERM. XVII. plenty provided, our lives made ſafe and ſweet to us therein. We are members of a church, and highly intereſted in the proſperous eſtate and well-being thereof: when unity therefore is preſerved, and charity abounds; when knowledge is increaſed, and virtue encouraged; when piety flouriſhes, and truth triumphs therein; we are bound to render all poſſible thanks to the gracious Beſtower of thoſe ineſtimable bleſſings.

We are much miſtaken in our account, if we either determine our own concernments, or meaſure this duty, by the narrow rule of our private advantage: for ſubducting either the benefits commonly indulged to mankind, or thoſe which accrue from the welfare of public ſociety, what poſſibility will remain of ſubſiſtence, of ſafety, of content unto us? what but confuſion, want, violence, and diſquiet?

As we are concerned with our utmoſt endeavours to promote, to wiſh and pray for, to delight and rejoice in, the public good of mankind, the peace of our country, the proſperity of Sion; ſo we are to bleſs and thank him, by whoſe gracious help and furtherance they are attained.

If we conſult all hiſtory, (ſacred and civil) we ſhall find it to contain hardly any thing elſe conſiderable, but the earneſt endeavours of good men for public benefit, and their thankful acknowledgments to the divine goodneſs for it. Moſes, David, Nehemiah, St. Paul, all the Prophets, and all the Apoſtles, what other things memorable did they do, but ſerve God in procuring public good, and bleſs God for conferring it?

Neither only as we are combined with others in common intereſt, but without ſelfiſh reſpects, purely out of charity and humanity, and ingenuous pity, are we obliged to thank God for the benefits he is pleaſed to impart to others. If upon theſe accounts we are commanded to *do good to all men*; to *rejoice with thoſe that rejoice*; to *love even thoſe that hate us*, and

Gal. vi. 10. Ro. xii. 15. Matt. v. 44.

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and *bleſs thoſe that curſe us*; 'tis (by fair conſequence) ſurely intended, that we ſhould alſo bleſs God for the good iſſue of our honeſt endeavours, or of our good wiſhes for them. SERM. XVII.

And verily could we become endowed with this excellent quality of delighting in others' good, and heartily thanking God for it, we need not to envy the wealth and ſplendor of the greateſt princes, not the wiſdom of the profoundeſt doctors, not the religion of the devouteſt anchorets, no, nor the happineſs of the higheſt angels: for upon this ſuppoſition, as the glory of all is God's, ſo the content in all would be ours. All the fruit they can perceive of their happy condition, of what kind ſoever, is to rejoice in it themſelves, and to praiſe God for it: and this ſhould we then do as well as they. My neighbour's good ſucceſs is mine, if I equally triumph therein: his riches are mine, if I delight to ſee him enjoy them: his health is mine, if it refreſh my ſpirits: his virtue mine, if I by it am bettered, and have hearty complacence therein. By this means a man derives a confluence of all joy upon himſelf, and makes himſelf, as it were, the centre of all felicity, enriches himſelf with the plenty, and ſatiates himſelf with the pleaſure, of the whole world: reſerving to God the praiſe, he enjoys the ſatisfaction of all good that happens to any.

Thus we ſee David frequently thanking God, not for his favour only and mercy ſhewed particularly to himſelf, but for his common munificence toward all; for (to uſe his own phraſes) *his goodneſs to all, and his tender mercies over all his works*; for *executing judgment in the behalf of the oppreſſed*; for *feeding the hungry*; for *looſening the priſoners*; for *opening the eyes of the blind*; for *raiſing them that are bowed down*; for *preſerving the ſtrangers*, and *relieving the fatherleſs and widow*; for *lifting up the meek*; for *loving, and caring for, and defending, the righteous*; for *opening his hand, and ſatisfying the deſire of every living thing*; for *giving to*

Pſ. cxlv. 9. cxlvi. 7, 8, 9. Pſ. cxlvii. 6. 1 Pet. v. 7. Pſ. v. 11. civ. 28. cxlv. 16. cxlvii. 9.

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SERM. XVII. *to the beaſt his food, and to the young ravens when they cry unto him*; in a word, for his goodneſs to every particular creature, not excluding the moſt contemptible nor the moſt ſavage of all. And how affectionately doth St. Paul every where thank God for the growth in grace and ſpiritual wiſdom, for the patience in affliction, and perſeverance in faith, of thoſe good Chriſtians he writes unto! So ſhould, with an unreſtrained exuberance, both our charity to men, and our gratitude to God, abound. But moreover,

5. We are obliged to give thanks, not only for pleaſant and proſperous occurrences of providence, but for thoſe alſo which are adverſe to our deſire, and diſtaſteful unto our natural ſenſe; for poverty, ſickneſs, diſgrace; for all the ſorrows and troubles, the diſaſters and diſappointments, that befal us. We are bound to pay thanks, not for our food only, but for our phyſic alſo: (which, though ingrateful to our palate, is profitable for our health:) we are obliged, in the ſchool of providence, not only for the good inſtructions, but for the ſeaſonable corrections alſo vouchſafed unto us, (whereby, though our ſenſes are offended, our manners are bettered[d].) Whatever proceeds from good purpoſe, and tends to a happy end, that is graciouſly deſigned, and effectually conduces to our good; is a fit ſubject of thankſgiving: and ſuch may all adverſities prove unto us. They proceed uſually from love and kind intention toward us: for, *Whom God loveth he chaſteneth, and ſcourgeth every ſon whom he receiveth:* and, *I know, O Lord*, ſaith David, *that thy judgments are right, and that thou in faithfulneſs haſt afflicted me: in faithfulneſs*, that is, with a ſincere intention of doing me good.

Heb. xii. 6.

Pſ. cxix. 75.

[d] Τὸν θεὸν ὁμοίως αἰνμνεῖν χρὴ, καὶ κολάζοντα, καὶ ἀνιέντα κολάσεως· ἀμφότερα γὰρ κηδεμονίας, ἀμφότερα ἀγαθότητος, &c. *Chryſoſt. in Pſal.* cxlviii.

God

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God thoroughly knows our conſtitution, what is noxious to our health, and what may remedy our diſtempers; and therefore accordingly diſpoſeth to us SERM. XVII.

——pro jucundis aptiſſima quæque——;

inſtead of pleaſant honey, he ſometimes preſcribes wholeſome wormwood for us. We are ourſelves greatly ignorant of what is conducible to our real good, and, were the choice of our condition wholly permitted to us, ſhould make very fooliſh, very diſadvantageous elections.

We ſhould (be ſure) all of us embrace a rich and plentiful eſtate; when as, God knows, that would make us ſlothful and luxurious, ſwell us with pride and haughty thoughts, encumber us with anxious cares, and expoſe us to dangerous temptations; would render us forgetful of ourſelves, and neglectful of him. Therefore he wiſely diſpoſeth poverty unto us; poverty the mother of ſobriety, the nurſe of induſtry, the miſtreſs of wiſdom; which will make us underſtand ourſelves and our dependence on him, and force us to have recourſe unto his help. And is there not reaſon we ſhould be thankful for the means by which we are delivered from thoſe deſperate miſchiefs, and obtain theſe excellent advantages?

We ſhould all (certainly) chooſe the favour and applauſe of men: but this, God alſo knows, would corrupt our minds with vain conceit, would intoxicate our fancies with ſpurious pleaſure, would tempt us to aſcribe immoderately to ourſelves, and ſacrilegiouſly to deprive God of his due honour. Therefore he adviſedly ſuffers us to incur the diſgrace and diſpleaſure, the hatred and contempt of men; that ſo we may place our glory only in the hopes of his favour, and may purſue more earneſtly the purer delights of a good conſcience. And doth not this part of divine providence highly merit our thanks?

We would all climb into high places, not conſidering

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SERM. XVII. dering the precipices on which they ſtand, nor the vertiginouſneſs of our own brains: but God keeps us ſafe in the humble valleys, allotting to us employments which we are more capable to manage.

We ſhould perhaps inſolently abuſe power, were it committed to us: we ſhould employ great parts on unwieldy projects, as many do, to the diſturbance of others, and their own ruin: vaſt knowledge would cauſe us to over-value ourſelves, and contemn others: enjoying continual health, we ſhould not perceive the benefit thereof, nor be mindful of him that gave it. A ſuitable mediocrity therefore of theſe things the divine goodneſs allotteth unto us, that we may neither ſtarve for want, nor ſurfeit with plenty.

In fine, the advantages ariſing from afflictions are ſo many and ſo great, that (had I time, and were it ſeaſonable to inſiſt largely on this ſubject,) it were eaſy to demonſtrate, that we have great reaſon, not only to be contented with, but to rejoice in, and to be very thankful for, all the croſſes and vexations we meet with: to receive them cheerfully at God's hand, as the medicines of our ſoul, and the condiments of our fortune; as the arguments of his goodwill, and the inſtruments of virtue; as ſolid grounds of hope, and comfortable preſages of future joy unto us.

6. Laſtly, we are obliged to thank God, not only for corporeal and temporal benefits, but alſo (and that principally) for ſpiritual and eternal bleſſings. We are apt, as to deſire more vehemently, to rejoice more heartily in the fruition, and more paſſionately to bewail the loſs of temporal good things; ſo more ſincerely and ſeriouſly to expreſs our gratitude for the reception of them, than for others relating to our ſpiritual good, to our everlaſting welfare. Wherein we misjudge and miſbehave ourſelves extremely. For, as much as the reaſonable ſoul (that goodly image of the divine eſſence, breathed from the mouth of God) doth in dignity of nature, and purity of

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of ſubſtance, excel this feculent lump of organized clay, our body; as the bliſsful raviſhments of ſpirit ſurpaſs the dull ſatisfactions of ſenſe; as the bottomleſs depth of eternity exceeds that ſhallow ſurface of time, which terminates this tranſitory life; in ſuch proportion ſhould our appetite unto, our complacence in, our gratitude for ſpiritual bleſſings tranſcend the affections (reſpectively) engaged about theſe corporeal accommodations. SERM. XVII.

Conſider that injunction of our Saviour to his diſciples; *In this rejoice not, that the ſpirits are ſubject unto you; but rather rejoice, becauſe your names are written in heaven. Rejoice not*, that is, be not at all affected with this (although in itſelf very rare accompliſhment, eminent privilege, glorious power of working that indeed greateſt of miracles, ſubjecting devils; that is, baffling the ſhrewdeſt craft, and ſubduing the ſtrongeſt force in nature) in compariſon of that delight, which the conſideration of the divine favour, in order to your eternal felicity, doth afford. Luke x. 20.

We are, 'tis true, greatly indebted to God for our creation, for that he hath extracted us from nothing, and placed us in ſo lofty a rank among his creatures; for the excellent faculties of ſoul and body, wherewith he hath endued us; and for many moſt admirable prerogatives of our outward eſtate: but much more for our redemption, and the wonderful circumſtances of unexpreſſible love and grace therein declared; for his deſcending to a conjunction with our nature, and elevating us to a participation of his; for dignifying us with more illuſtrious titles, and inſtating us in a ſure capacity of a much ſuperior happineſs. Our daily food deſerves well a grace to be ſaid before and after it: but how much more that conſtant proviſion of heavenly manna, the evangelical verity; thoſe ſavoury delicacies of devotion, whereby our ſouls are nouriſhed to eternal life? 'Tis a laudable cuſtom, when we are demanded concern-

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SERM. XVII.

ing our health, to anſwer, *Well, I thank God*; but much more reaſon have we to ſay ſo, if our conſcience can atteſt concerning that ſound conſtitution of mind, whereby we are diſpoſed vigorouſly to perform thoſe virtuous functions, due from reaſonable nature, and conformable to the divine law. If for the proſperous ſucceſs of our worldly attempts; for avoiding dangers, that threatened corporal pain and damage to us; for defeating the adverſaries of our ſecular quiet, we make *Te Deum laudamus* our ἐπινίκιον, (our ſong for victory;) how much more for the happy progreſs of our ſpiritual affairs, (affairs of incomparably higheſt conſequence;) for eſcaping thoſe dreadful hazards of utter ruin, of endleſs torture; for vanquiſhing ſin and hell, thoſe irreconcileable enemies to our everlaſting peace; are we obliged to utter triumphal *anthems* of joy and thankfulneſs?

Pſ. ciii. 1, &c.

This is the order obſerved by the Pſalmiſt: inciting his *ſoul* to *bleſs God* for *all his benefits*, he begins with the conſideration of God's mercy in pardoning his ſins; then proceeds to his goodneſs in beſtowing temporal favours. *Who forgiveth all thy ſins*, leads the van; *Who ſatisfieth thy mouth with good things*, brings up the rear in the enumeration and acknowledgment of God's benefits. That our minds are illuſtrated with the knowledge of God, and his glorious attributes, of Chriſt, and his bleſſed Goſpel, of that ſtraight path which conducteth to true happineſs; that by divine aſſiſtance we are enabled to elude the allurements, to withſtand the violence of temptation, to aſſuage immoderate deſires, to bridle exorbitant paſſions, to correct vicious inclinations of mind; requires more our hearty thanks, than for that we were able by our natural wit to penetrate the abſtruſeſt myſteries, or to ſubjugate empires by our bodily ſtrength. The forgiveneſs of our ſins doth more oblige us to a grateful acknowledgment of the divine goodneſs, than ſhould God enrich us with

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with all the treaſures contained in the bowels of the earth, or bottom of the ocean. One glimpſe of his favourable countenance ſhould more enflame our affections, than being inveſted with all the imaginable ſplendor of worldly glory. SERM. XVII.

Of theſe ineſtimable benefits, and all the advantageous circumſtances wherewith they are attended, we ought to maintain in our hearts conſtant reſentments; to excite our thankfulneſs, to kindle our love, to quicken our obedience, by the frequent contemplation of them.

Thus have I (though, I confeſs, much more ſlightly than ſo worthy a ſubject did require) proſecuted the ſeveral particulars obſervable in theſe words. I ſhould conclude with certain inducements perſuaſive to the practice of this duty; whereof I have in the tenor both of the former and preſent diſcourſe inſinuated divers, and could propound many more: but (in compliance with the time) I ſhall content myſelf briefly to conſider only theſe three very obvious ones.

Firſt therefore, we may conſider, that there is no diſpoſition whatever more deeply radicated in the original conſtitution of all ſouls endued with any kind of perception or paſſion, than being ſenſible of benefits received; being kindly affected with love and reſpect toward them that exhibit them; being ready with ſuitable expreſſions to acknowledge them, and to endeavour competent recompences for them. The worſt of men, the moſt devoid of all not only piety, but humanity and common ingenuity, the moſt barbarous and moſt wicked, (whom neither ſenſe of equity nor reſpect to law, no promiſe of reward or fear of vengeance, can anywiſe engage to do things juſt and fitting, or reſtrain from enormous actions,) retain notwithſtanding ſomething of this natural inclination, and are uſually ſenſible of good turns done unto them. Experience teaches us thus much; and ſo doth that ſure oracle of our Saviour: *If*, ſaith he, *ye* I. Luke vi. 33.

SERM. XVII. *ye do good to thoſe who do good to you, what thanks is it? for even ſinners* (that is, men of apparently lewd and diſſolute converſation) *do the ſame.*

Yea even beaſts, and thoſe not only the moſt gentle and ſociable of them, (the officious dog, the tractable horſe, the docile elephant,) but the wildeſt alſo and fierceſt of them (the untameable lion, the cruel tyger, and ravenous bear, as ſtories tell us, and experience atteſts,) bear ſome kindneſs, ſhew ſome grateful affection to thoſe that provide for them.

Vid. Gell. lib. v. c. 14.

Neither wild beaſts only, but even inanimate creatures ſeem not altogether inſenſible of benefits, and lively repreſent unto us a natural abhorrence of ingratitude. The rivers openly diſcharge into the ſea thoſe waters, which by indiſcernible conduits they derived thence; the heavens remit in bountiful ſhowers what from the earth they had exhaled in vapour; and the earth by a fruitful increaſe repays the culture beſtowed thereon; if not, (as the Apoſtle to the Hebrews doth pronounce) it deſerves *curſing* and *reprobation*. So monſtrous a thing, and univerſally abominable to nature, is all ingratitude. And how execrable a prodigy is it then toward God, from whom alone we receive whatever we enjoy, whatever we can expect of good?

Heb. vi. 8.

II. The ſecond obligation to this duty is moſt juſt and equal. For, (as he* ſaid well) *Beneficium qui dare neſcit, injuſte petit; He unjuſtly requires* (much more unjuſtly receives) *a benefit, who is not minded to requite it.* In all reaſon we are indebted for what is freely given, as well as for what is lent unto us. For the freeneſs of the giver, his not exacting ſecurity, nor expreſſing conditions of return, doth not diminiſh, but rather increaſe the debt. He that gives, indeed, according to human (or political) law, (which, in order to preſervation of public peace, requires only a punctual performance of contracts,) transfers his right, and alienates his poſſeſſion: but according to that more noble and perfect rule of ingenuity, (the law which

* Laberius.

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which God and Angels and good men chiefly obſerve, and govern themſelves by,) what is given is but committed to the faith, depoſited in the hand, treaſured up in the cuſtody of him that receives it: and what more palpable iniquity is there, than to betray the truſt, or to detain the pledge, not of ſome inconſiderable trifle, but of ineſtimable good-will? *Excepta Macedonum gente*, ſaith Seneca, *non eſt ulla data adverſus ingratum actio: In no nation (excepting the Macedonians) an action could be preferred againſt ingrateful perſons, as ſo.* (Though Xenophon, no mean author, reports, that among the Perſians alſo there were judgments aſſigned, and puniſhments appointed for ingratitude.) However, in the court of heaven, and at the tribunal of conſcience, no offender is more conſtantly arraigned, none more ſurely condemned, none more ſeverely puniſhed, than the ingrateful man. SERM. XVII. Καλὸν δὲ θησαύρισμα χαμαὶ κεῖται &c. *De Benef.* lib. vii. cap. 6.

Since therefore we have received all from the divine bounty; if God ſhould in requital exact, that we ſacrifice our lives to the teſtimony of his truth; that we employ our utmoſt pains, expend our whole eſtate, adventure our health, and proſtitute all our earthly contents to his ſervice; ſince he did but revoke his own, it were great injuſtice to refuſe compliance with his demands: how much more, when he only expects from us and requires ſome few acknowledgments of our obligation to him, ſome little portions of our ſubſtance, for the relief of them that need, ſome eaſy obſervances of his moſt reaſonable commands?

III. Thirdly, This is a moſt ſweet and delightful duty. *Praiſe the Lord*, ſaith the moſt experienced Pſalmiſt, *for the Lord is good; ſing praiſes to his name, for it is pleaſant:* and otherwhere, *Praiſe the Lord, for it is good to ſing praiſes to our God; for it is pleaſant, and praiſe is comely.* The performance of this duty, as it eſpecially proceeds from good humour, and a cheer- Pſ. cxxxv. 3. Pſ. cxlvii. 1. ix. 1.

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SERM. XVII. ful diſpoſition of mind; ſo it feeds and foments them; both root and fruit thereof are hugely ſweet and ſapid. Whence St. James; *If any man be af-*
Jam. v. 13. *flicted, let him pray; is any merry, let him ſing pſalms.* (*Pſalms*, the proper matter of which is praiſe and thankſgiving.)

Other duties of devotion have ſomething laborious in them, ſomething diſguſtful to our ſenſe. Prayer minds us of our wants and imperfections; confeſſion induces a ſad remembrance of our miſdeeds and bad deſerts: but thankſgiving includes nothing uneaſy or unpleaſant; nothing but the memory and ſenſe of exceeding goodneſs.

All love is ſweet; but that eſpecially which ariſes, not from a bare apprehenſion only of the object's worth and dignity, but from a feeling of its ſingular beneficence and uſefulneſs unto us. And what thought can enter into the heart of man more comfortable and delicious than this, that the great Maſter of all things, the moſt wiſe and mighty King of heaven and earth, hath entertained a gracious regard, hath expreſſed a real kindneſs towards us? that we are in capacity to honour, to pleaſe, to preſent an acceptable ſacrifice to him, who can render us perfectly happy? that we are admitted to the practice of that wherein the ſupreme joy of paradiſe, and the perfection of angelical bliſs conſiſts? For praiſe and thankſgiving are the moſt delectable buſineſs of heaven; and God grant they may be our greateſt delight, our moſt frequent employment upon earth.

Vid. Pſal. lxix. 30, 31. l. 13, 14. 23. To theſe I might add ſuch farther conſiderations: That this duty is of all moſt acceptable to God, and moſt profitable to us. That gratitude for benefits procures more, diſpoſing God to beſtow, and qualifying us to receive them. That the ſerious performance of this duty efficaciouſly promotes and facilitates the practice of other duties; ſince the more we are

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are ſenſible of our obligations to God, the more SERM. ready we ſhall be to pleaſe him, by obedience to his XVII. commandments. What St. Chryſoſtom ſaith of prayer, It is impoſſible that he, who with competent promptitude of mind doth conſtantly apply himſelf thereto, ſhould ever ſin, is moſt eſpecially true of this part of devotion: for how can we at the ſame time be ſenſible of God's goodneſs to us, and willingly offend him? That the memory of paſt benefits, and ſenſe of preſent, confirms our faith, and nouriſhes our hope of future. That the circumſtances of the divine beneficence mightily ſtrengthen the obligation to this duty; eſpecially his abſolute freeneſs in giving, and our total unworthineſs to receive; our very ingratitude itſelf affording ſtrong inducements to gratitude. That giving thanks hath *de facto* been always the principal part of all religion; (whether inſtituted by divine command, or prompted by natural reaſon, or propagated by general tradition;) the Ethnic devotion conſiſting (as it were totally) in the praiſe of their gods, and acknowledgment of their benefits; the Jewiſh more than half in euchariſtical oblations, and in ſolemn commemorations of providential favours; and that of the ancient Chriſtians ſo far forth, that bye-ſtanders could hardly diſcern any other thing in their religious practice, than that they ſang hymns to Chriſt, and by mutual ſacraments obliged themſelves to abſtain from all villainy. But I will rather wholly omit the proſecution of theſe pregnant arguments, than be farther offenſive to your patience.

Vid. divin. Chryſ. locum tom. v. p. 76.

Plin. Epiſt.

Now the bleſſed Fountain of all goodneſs and mercy inſpire our hearts with his heavenly grace, and thereby enable us rightly to apprehend, diligently to conſider, faithfully to remember, worthily to eſteem, to be heartily affected with, to render all due acknowledgment, praiſe, love, and thankful obedience for all his (infinitely great and innumerable many) favours, mercies, and benefits

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SERM. XVII. *freely conferred upon us; and let us ſay with David, Bleſſed be the Lord God of Iſrael, who only doth wondrous things: and bleſſed be his glorious name for ever, and let the whole earth be filled with his glory. Bleſſed be the Lord God of Iſrael from everlaſting to everlaſting: and let all the people ſay, Amen.*

Pſ. lxxii. 18, 19. Pſ. cvi. 48.

SERMON

SERMON XVIII.

Of Quietneſs, and doing our own Buſineſs.

1 THESS. iv. 11.

And that ye ſtudy to be quiet, and to do your own buſineſs. Chryſ. in 2 Cor. Or. 19.

AS frequently between neighbouring ſtates there do riſe diſſenſions and conteſts about the juſt limits of their territories; ſo doth it frequently happen between virtue and vice, right and wrong, duty and miſcarriage in practice: for although the extreme degrees, and even the middle regions of theſe things are very diſtant, yet the borders of them do lie very cloſe together, and are in a manner contiguous; a certain ridge of ſeparation running between them, which commonly (being very narrow, thin, and obſcure) it is not eaſy to diſcern. So it particularly falleth out in the matter before us, wherein our text is concerned. Duty and offence do nearly confine, and almoſt indiſcerniby differ one from the other; for there are about this caſe precepts which ſeem to contradict; there are duties appearing to thwart one another.

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St. Paul here biddeth us to be ſtudious or ambitious of quiet; otherwhere he enjoineth us to be earneſtly active, (to be σπουδῇ μὴ ὀκνηροὶ, *not ſlothful in buſineſs*;) Rom. xii. 11.

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SERM. XVIII. neſs;) Here he would have us to mind our own affairs; otherwhere he preſcribeth, that we ſhould *not look every man to his own things, but every man alſo to the things of others.*

Phil. ii. 4.

According to the general drift of Scripture, and the tenor of our religion, we are in charity obliged to concern ourſelves heartily for the good of our neighbour, and to ſtrive earneſtly in promoting it; we are enjoined ſo far to interpoſe and meddle in the affairs of others, as to watch over them for their good; to inſtruct and adviſe them, to admoniſh and excite them, to check and reprove them upon occaſion; to offer and yield them ſuccour, to compoſe differences between them; to promote their edification and peace: *Let us*, ſaith the Apoſtle to the Hebrews, *conſider one another, to provoke unto love, and to good works. Let us*, ſaith St. Paul to the Romans, *follow after the things which make for peace, and things wherewith one may edify another*; and, *comfort yourſelves together, and edify one another; warn them that are unruly, comfort the feeble-minded, ſupport the weak*, ſaith he to the Theſſalonians in this Epiſtle.

Καλανεῖμεν ἀλλήλους. Heb. x. 24. Rom. xiv. 19. xv. 2. 1 Theſſ. v. 11, 14.

To be zealous and earneſt in the maintenance and propagation of truth, of virtue, of piety, is a duty incumbent on us, which implieth care and activity concerning others; that we offer to inſtruct them, that we enter into conteſt with them, that we examine their words and actions, that we preſume to tax and oppoſe them.

Tit. i. 11.

In fine: our religion doth ſeem by the bands of mutual relation, and obligations of charity, ſo to unite us together, ſo to endear us to one another, and to all men, that all things belonging to our brethren do nearly touch us, and ſhould anſwerably affect us; ſo that, by intermeddling with any thing relating to their welfare, we can hardly be ſaid to meddle with what doth not concern us.

The condition of things alſo may ſeem to require, that we ſo intermeddle; for the duties and affairs of men

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men are ſo entangled or interwoven, that we can SERM. hardly proſecute any concernments of our own, XVIII. without being engaged in the matters of others: in diſcharging all offices of ſociety, in purſuance of any traffic or commerce, in all intercourſe and converſation, while we tranſact our own buſineſs, we cannot avoid the furthering or obſtructing the buſineſs of others, who are engaged in the ſame, or contrary deſigns. Society doth ſubſiſt by combinations of care and pain, regarding common intereſts, ſo that it ſeemeth impoſſible ſo to mind our own buſineſs, as not to meddle with the buſineſs of others.

Yet nowithſtanding St. Paul enjoineth us ſo to affect quiet, as ſimply to mind our own buſineſs, or not to be meddleſome in the concernments of others; for that *doing our own buſineſs* is meant excluſively to meddling with the affairs of others, is plain enough by the importance of τὰ ἴδια, which is emphatical, and ſignifieth only our own, or our proper buſineſs; and becauſe it is joined with *being quiet*, which reſpecteth others, and importeth not ſtirring beyond our own bounds; to be ſo meddleſome, being alſo a practice expreſsly condemned by St. Peter, in that prohibition, *But let none of you ſuffer as a murderer,* 1 Pet. iv. 15. *or as a thief, or as a malefactor, or as a buſy-body in other men's matters:* where pragmaticalneſs is, we ſee, not only forbidden, but is coupled with the moſt heinous offences.

How then ſhall we reconcile theſe things? How ſhall we in the caſe ſever between the bounds of duty and blame? It is indeed ſomewhat difficult to do it preciſely, and with diſtinctions which ſhall reach all caſes. But ſomewhat I ſhall endeavour toward it, by propounding ſome rules and directions, which ſhould commonly be obſerved in our dealing and intercourſe with others: but firſt let us a little reflect upon the terms in which the precept is couched.

Study to be quiet; *Study*; the word is φιλοτιμεῖσθαι, which

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SERM. XVIII. which ſignifieth to be ambitious, that is, to affect quiet with the like vehemency of deſire and care, as men are wont to purſue reputation, dignity, and power, the objects of ambition: the expreſſion containeth a remarkable emphaſis, or a grave *acumen*; for whereas ambition commonly doth prompt men to be reſtleſsly buſy, and engageth them in the concernments proper to others, St. Paul biddeth them to be ambitious the contrary way, in affecting quiet, and abſtinence from other affairs beſide their own.

To be quiet: This doth ſignify not a phyſical, but a moral reſt; not a total forbearance of action; not a faſtidious or drowſy liſtleſſneſs to do any thing; not a ſenſeleſs indifferency concerning the matters of others; not an abſolute ſequeſtering ourſelves from common affairs: this is not quiet or tranquillity, the τὸ ἡσυχάζειν here, but a naughty ſloth, ſtupidity, or ſavageneſs: the quiet here meant is oppoſed to diſorderly motion, to turbulency, to contention, to pragmatical curioſity, to all ſuch exorbitant behaviour, whereby the right of others is infringed, their peace diſturbed, their juſt intereſt or welfare anywiſe prejudiced. This quiet is a calm, ſteady, regular way of proceeding, within the bounds and meaſures preſcribed by reaſon, juſtice and charity, modeſty and ſobriety: ſuch a motion as the heavenly bodies do keep, which ſo move that they ſeem ever to ſtand ſtill, and never diſturb one another: in fine, what a quiet is meant, the ſubſequent words and the context do ſhew: it followeth,

And πράσσειν τὰ ἴδια, *to do our own buſineſs*, or to act things proper and pertinent to us; things which ſuit to our condition, our ſtation, our vocation; whereby we may diſcharge our own duties, and ſupply our own needs; may work benefit to others, or however avoid being anywiſe burthenſome or troubleſome to them; an inſtance of which practice is immediately ſubjoined; *to work with our own hands — that we may have lack of nothing*; in another place St. Paul calleth it

μετὰ

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μετὰ ἡσυχίας ἐργάζεσθαι, *to work with quiet*, oppoſing it to περιεργάζεσθαι, being over-buſy, or pragmatically curious, and to walking diſorderly; that is, beyond the bounds of our calling, or the rules of our duty; ſo as to encroach upon the rights, or moleſt the quiet of others. SERM. XVIII. 2 Theſſ. iii. 12.

The words then, as they do imply an obligation lying upon us to be induſtrious in our own buſineſs, ſo they chiefly deſign to prohibit our meddling with the concernments of others: but how to ſettle the limits between this quiet minding our own buſineſs, and a culpable neglect of the duties concerning others; how to diſtinguiſh between meddling innocently, from being blameably meddleſome, *hic labor, hoc opus eſt*, this is that hard taſk which I am to undertake, but I cannot hope thoroughly to perform. However, the method toward it, which I ſhall obſerve, is this: Firſt, I ſhall touch ſome caſes, in which it is allowable or commendable to meddle with the affairs of others; then I ſhall propound ſome general rules, according to which ſuch meddleſomeneſs is commonly blameable: in the next place, I ſhall aſſign ſome directions proper to ſome chief and moſt obvious kinds of meddling: and laſtly, offer ſome conſiderations to diſſuade men from this pragmatical humour.

1. Superiors may intermeddle with the buſineſs of their inferiors, (that is, of ſuch as are ſubject to their care and charge) in all matters relating to the needful execution of their office. Magiſtrates may inſpect the carriage, may examine the doings, may reprehend and puniſh the offences of their ſubjects: parents may adviſe, rebuke, and correct their children: ſpiritual guides and paſtors may admoniſh and reprove their flock. Theſe things while (with due prudence, equity, and moderation) they perform, they do indeed πράσσειν τὰ ἴδια, *do their own buſineſs*; it is their proper work, to which God hath deſigned them, and which reaſon exacteth of them; they are appointed

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SERM. XVIII. appointed (to uſe St. Paul's expreſſion) *to attend continually upon this very thing*; their proceedings therefore are not to be charged with culpable pragmaticalneſs.

Rom. xiii. 6. 2. In any caſe, wherein the honour and intereſt of God is much concerned, we may interpoſe in vindication and maintenance of them. If any man dareth to blaſpheme God's name, we may and ought to ſtand up in its defence; if any man diſparageth religion, we ſhould ſtrive to clear its repute; if any man impugneth any divine truth of moment, we ſhould endeavour to aſſert it; if any man notoriouſly tranſgreſſeth God's law, we may diſcountenance his preſumption, and reprove him for it: every man in ſuch caſes, as God's ſubject, hath not only a commiſſion, but an obligation; is indeed by his allegiance bound to ſerve God, in maintaining the honour and intereſt of his empire; it is foul diſloyalty, it is pitiful baſeneſs to forbear meddling in ſuch caſes [a]. Thus have good men, without fear or ſhame, defended religion and truth, againſt the mightieſt powers and moſt dangerous oppoſitions

Pſ. cvi. 30. that could be: thus *ſtood up Phineas, and executed judgment*, not only checking, but avenging that heinous ſcandal: thus Elias maintained the true worſhip of God, againſt all the corrupters of it, the kings and whole nation of Iſrael: thus the Prophets did not forbear to tax the wicked manners of the princes, the prieſts and the people in their times: thus St. John Baptiſt did not ſtick to reprove king Herod for his unlawful practice: ſo our Saviour cenſured the ſuperſtitious and hypocritical ſcribes, and he chaſtiſed the profaners of God's houſe: ſo,

[a] Κοινόν ἐστι τὸ ἔγκλημα, δημόσιον τὸ ἀδίκημα· ἔξεστιν ἑκάστῳ τῶν βουλομένων κατηγορεῖν. *Chryſ.* Ἀνδρ. ά.

Κἂν ἀκούσῃς τινὸς ἐν ἀμφόδῳ, ἢ ἐν ἀγορᾷ μέσῃ βλασφημοῦντος τὸν θεὸν, προσελθὲ, ἐπίλιμπσον· κἂν πληγὰς ἐπιθεῖναι δέῃ, μὴ παραιτήσῃ, ῥάπισον αὐτοῦ τὴν ὄψιν, σύλλιψον αὐτοῦ τὸ σῶμα, ἁγίασον σὴν τὴν χεῖρα διὰ τῆς πληγῆς. &c. *Chryſ.* ibid.

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in fine, the holy Apoſtles reſolutely did aſſert God's truth againſt all the world. SERM. XVIII.

3. When the public weal and ſafety are manifeſtly concerned, we may alſo intermeddle to ſupport or ſecure them: ſo may we rebuke him that ſlandereth or reproacheth our prince; we may check him that would break the peace, we may impeach him that violateth the laws, conducing to public welfare: every man is a ſoldier againſt traitors and enemies of his country: every man is born with a commiſſion to defend the public againſt thoſe which plot its ruin or harm: every man is a party for his prince againſt rebels, for the church againſt ſchiſmatics, for the law againſt lawleſs tranſgreſſors, for common peace againſt thoſe who outrageouſly diſturb it: duty to our ſuperiors, juſtice and charity to mankind, juſt regard to our own welfare, allow and oblige us to ſuch meddling. Tertull.

4. We may alſo meddle for the ſuccour of right againſt palpable wrong and outrage: we may help an honeſt man againſt a thief aſſaulting him: we may guard the life of any man againſt an aſſaſſin; we may vindicate the reputation of an innocent perſon aſperſed by a ſlanderous tongue; as Moſes —— *ſeeing one of his brethren ſuffer wrong, defended him; and avenged him that was oppreſſed, and ſmote the Egyptian*; as the penitent thief rebuked his companion, unjuſtly railing upon our Saviour. The common intereſt of juſtice and charity do not only excuſe, but commend meddling in ſuch caſes. Acts vii. 24. Luke xxiii. 40.

5. We may likewiſe meddle with the proceedings of others, when our own juſt defence requireth it: we may repel thoſe who attack our ſafety or peace, who invade or rifle our goods, who traduce our good name: we may endeavour to defeat their plots, and to reſtrain their violence. This is indeed doing our own buſineſs; for to preſerve our life with its conveniences and comforts, to maintain our right and juſt intereſt, to keep our honour and reputation clear from Cum moderamine inculpatæ tutelæ.

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SERM. XVIII. from ſcandal, is incumbent upon us: we are naturally the patrons, advocates, and guards of thoſe conſiderable goods aſſigned or entruſted to us by Providence.

6. When the life or welfare (either ſpiritual or temporal) of our neighbour is deeply concerned, and cannot otherwiſe than by our aid be ſupported or relieved, we may lawfully interpoſe to yield it: if we ſee him expoſing his life to any great hazard, or engaging his ſoul into any great ſin, we may in any fair way, (by admonition, advice, reproof, politic device, harmleſs force) without any invitation or licence, with or againſt his will, preſume to reclaim or reſtrain him. We may ſtop him in his career to ruin or grievous miſchief, we may withhold him from running into a ſnare, or tumbling down a precipice, or drinking in poiſon; we may, as St. Jude ſpeaketh, *ſnatch him out of the fire.* In ſuch caſes we may reaſonably ſuppoſe, that our neighbour, being himſelf, will allow us to meddle, or will not be diſpleaſed therewith; if he hath not his wits about him, we may ſupply him with ours in ſuch exigence: his preſent conſent and approbation are not then requiſite, he not being in condition to yield them; he needeth guardians, and opportunity conſtituteth us in that office: extreme and evident need will not only excuſe the liberty we ſhall aſſume, but it obligeth us to uſe our power to ſave him; in caſe of neglect, that ſurly anſwer, *Am I my brother's keeper?* will not ſerve our turn [b]. We may, we ſhould, it is not only innocent, but juſt and laudable for us to be watchful over our neighbour's concernment and deportment, if we do it out of pure charity, in a diſcreet, quiet, and gentle manner.

Jude 23. ἐκ τοῦ πυρὸς ἁρπάζοντες.

Invito non tribuitur quodcunque pro eo præſtatur. *Reg. J.* Furioſis nulla voluntas eſt. *R. J.*

Gen. iv. 9.

7. In fine, if any ſignal opportunity of doing our

[b] Μή μοι λέγε τὸ ψυχρὸν τοῦτο ῥῆμα· Τί δέ μοι μέλει; οὐδὲν ἔχω κοινὸν πρὸς αὐτὸν, &c. Vid. *Chryſ.* Ἀνδρ. 1. tom. ii. *Or.* 59. *in Mat. Orat.* 77, 78. *in Joh. Or.* 15. *in Eph. Or.* 19. *Chryſ. in Tit. Or.* 5. *in Hebr. Or.* 30.

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neighbour conſiderable good, eſpecially to his ſoul, doth offer itſelf, we may lawfully, we ſhould in charity embrace it: we may then even obtrude upon him our direction and ſuccour; if he be ſo blind as not to diſcern our good-will, ſo peeviſh as to diſlike our proceeding, ſo ingrateful as not to thank us for our pains, yet our good intent will juſtify us before God, and at the bar of reaſon: and we have, to countenance us therein, the common example of good men, who, for doing thus, have worthily been accounted the friends and benefactors of mankind. SERM. XVIII.

In theſe and the like caſes we may, without offending, intermeddle; in doing ſo, we may indeed truly be ſaid to be quiet, and to do our own buſineſs; becauſe there is no exorbitancy or diſorder in ſuch proceeding, becauſe God's law and ſound reaſon have appropriated theſe things to us, and made them our concernment. There is no buſineſs more proper or pertinent to us than that wherein we labour to promote the glory of God, or to procure the good of men; this is the principal deſign of our being, and therefore employment therein cannot miſbecome us: but we muſt however in ſuch caſes take heed that our pretences are real and well grounded, that our proceedings are regular and fair: we muſt not take or uſe ſuch liberty maliciouſly; we muſt never, out of hypocritical pretence to the maintenance of God's honour, of public good, of juſtice, truth or peace, be irregularly pragmatical or turbulent. This is to be doubly bad, adding to the irregularity of offence the wickedneſs of fraud and malice.

1. We ſhould never (out of ambition, covetous deſire, or ſelf-conceit) ſo meddle as to invade any man's office, or to aſſume the exerciſe of it. A private man ſhould not preſume to act the prince or the ſtateſman, offering to control thoſe who are not under him, to deliberate, debate, determine or paſs cenſure about political affairs or occurrences. A

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layman ſhould not intrude himſelf to adminiſter the ſacred functions of authoritative teaching, of diſpenſing the ſacraments, of exerciſing ſpiritual cenſures, of defining theological controverſies, which are committed to the guides and paſtors of the church. No man ſhould ſet himſelf upon the tribunal to judge, or undertake, without licence or invitation, to arbitrate the cauſes of others; doing thus, is to encroach upon God, and to uſurp upon man: we encroach upon God, aſſuming to ourſelves powers not derived from his order, and deſerting the ſtation aſſigned us by his providence; we uſurp upon man, exerciſing authority over him, which he is not bound to ſtoop unto.

2. We ſhould not, without call or allowance, meddle with our ſuperiors, ſo as to adviſe them, to reprehend them, to blame or inveigh againſt their proceedings; for this is to confound the right order of things, to treſpaſs beyond the bounds of our calling and ſtation, to do wrong, not only to them, but to the public, which is concerned in the upholding their power and reſpect: it is indeed a worſe fault than aſſuming the enſigns of their dignity, or counterfeiting their ſtamps; for that is but to borrow the ſemblance, this is to enjoy the ſubſtance of their authority.

Nothing in this buſy and licentious age is more uſual, than for private men to invade the office, to exerciſe the duties, to canvaſs and control the actions of their ſuperiors; diſcuſſing what they ought to do, and preſcribing laws to them; taxing what is done by them; murmuring at their decrees, and inveighing againſt their proceedings: every one is finding holes in the ſtate, and picking quarrels with the conduct of political affairs: every one is reforming and ſettling the public according to models framed in his own conceit. Things, ſaith one, are out of order; the conſtitution is very defective, and ought to be corrected; ſuch a law in all reaſon ſhould be repealed,

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pealed, and ſuch an one enacted: here our ſtateſmen were out of their politics, and there our lawgivers failed in point of equity or prudence. No, clamors another no leſs eagerly, all things ſtand as well as can be; nothing can be amended, or ought to be altered; our eſtabliſhment in all reſpects is more perfect than Plato's commonwealth, or the ſtate of Utopia. Thus doth each man appoint himſelf counſellor of ſtate, and turns legiſlator without any call from the king, or choice of the country: every one ſnatcheth at the ſceptre, and inveſts himſelf with the ſenator's robe: every one acteth a prince and a biſhop, or indeed is rather a cenſor and controller of both orders; not conſidering the wrong he committeth, nor the arrogance he practiſeth, nor the miſchiefs which naturally enſue upon ſuch demeanour: for to direct or to check governors, is in effect to exauctorate or depoſe them, ſubſtituting ourſelves in their room: and what greater injury can we do them or the public? To fix or reverſe laws, belongeth to the higheſt authority and deepeſt wiſdom, which it is enormous preſumption for us to arrogate to ourſelves: by attempting ſuch things we confound the ranks of men, and courſe of things; we ruffle the world, we ſupplant public tranquillity; and what greater miſchief than this can we do among men?

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It is the buſineſs and duty of thoſe whom God hath conſtituted his repreſentatives and miniſters to deliberate and conclude what is to be done; and for the due performance of their charge, they are accountable to their maſter, not to us; *Nobis obſequii gloria relicta eſt*[d]; our duty and our privilege (for ſo it is, if we could underſtand it, it being far more eaſy and ſafe,) it is to ſubmit and obey with quiet and patience; if we do more, we are therein irregular, and no leſs undutiful to God than to our ſuperiors; we

[d] Tibi ſummum rerum judicium dii dedere; nobis obſequii gloria relicta eſt. *M. Terent. apud Tac. Ann. V. C.*

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SERM. XVIII. forget thoſe divine rules and precepts; *Where the word of a king is, there is power; and who may ſay to him, What doſt thou? Submit yourſelves to every ordinance of man for the Lord's ſake: Do all things without murmurings and diſputings:* we conſider not what judgments are denounced upon thoſe whoſe character it is *to deſpiſe government, to be preſumptuous and ſelf-willed, not to be afraid to ſpeak evil of dignities.*

Eccleſ. viii. 4. 1 Pet. ii. 13. 18. Phil. ii. 14. 1 Pet. ii. 10.

We do not weigh the nature of the things we meddle with, nor the advantages of the perſons whom we tax, nor our own incapacity to judge rightly about them. There is a kind of ſacredneſs in the myſteries of ſtate: as the myſteries of faith do ſurpaſs natural reaſon, ſo do thoſe of ſtate tranſcend vulgar capacity: as prieſts by ſpecial grace are qualified beſt to underſtand the one, ſo are princes by like peculiar aſſiſtance enabled to penetrate the former. He that employeth them in that great work of governing the world, and maketh them inſtruments of his providence, is not wanting in affording to them direction and aid needful for the diſcharge of their duty; whence their judgments of things are ſomewhat more than human, and their words may with us paſs for oracular; *A divine ſentence*, the wiſe king ſaid, *is in the lips of the king; his mouth tranſgreſſeth not in judgment.* According to the ordinary reaſon of things, they are beſt able to judge of ſuch things, being, by reaſon of their eminent ſtation, able to diſcern more and farther than others; having by experience and conſtant practice acquired a truer inſight into things, and a better ſkill to manage them: whereas we being placed beneath in a valley, can have no good proſpect upon the grounds and cauſes of their reſolutions and proceedings: we, for want of ſufficient uſe and exerciſe, cannot ſkill to balance the contrary weights and reaſons of things; to ſurmount the difficulties and rubs, to unfold the knots and intrigues, which occur in affairs of that kind: we cannot expect thoſe ſpecial influences of light and ſtrength

Prov. xvi. 20.

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ſtrength from heaven toward judging of affairs, which SERM. do not properly concern us: wherefore we are alto- XVIII. gether incompetent judges, and impertinent dealers about thoſe things; it is great odds, that in doing ſo we ſhall miſtake and miſbehave ourſelves: we conſequently do vainly and naughtily to meddle with them. If the love of public good doth tranſport us, let us reſtrain ourſelves.

3. We ſhould not indeed ſo much as meddle with the affairs of our equals, (thoſe I mean not who do equal us in dignity or worth, but all ſuch who are not ſubject to our command or charge, however otherwiſe inferior to us: thoſe, I ſay, we ſhould not meddle with) ſo as to control or croſs them; to direct, or check, or cenſure their proceedings againſt their will, or without ſpecial reaſon engaging us thereto: for this is alſo to uſurp an undue authority, this argueth ſelf-conceit, this containeth immodeſty and arrogance.

4. We ſhould not, without the deſire or leave of parties concerned, intermeddle in the ſmaller temporal intereſts of others, upon pretence to further them, or with deſign to croſs them; for every man ſhould be left to himſelf to chooſe and to manage his own buſineſs, proſecuting it in the method he beſt liketh, (conſiſtent with law and juſtice toward others) without interruption or control: every man hath a right to do ſo, every man deſireth it, every man commonly hath a capacity ſufficient for it; for each man is apt to ſtudy his own buſineſs, to weigh his caſe, to poiſe his abilities with the circumſtances in which he ſtandeth; and thence is likely to get righter notions concerning the ſtate of his affairs, to deſcry better ways of accompliſhing them, than others leſs regarding them can do: every man is beſt acquainted with his own humour and temper, and thence can pick his buſineſs, and wind the management of it ſo that it ſhall comply with them, or not grate upon them.

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SERM. XVIII. However, as every man in point of intereſt and honour is moſt concerned in the ſucceſs, and ſuffereth moſt by fruſtration of his endeavours, ſo it is equal that a free choice of his proceedings ſhould be allowed him, without impediment or diſturbance; which enjoying, he will more contentedly bear any diſappointment that ſhall happen. This eſpecially we ſay, in reſpect to matters of leſſer conſequence, (ſuch as moſt worldly intereſts are) by the ill ſucceſs whereof our neighbour is not extremely damaged or hurt; for in ſuch caſes the immodeſty and arrogancy of meddling, with the vexation and trouble it is apt to work, do commonly much outweigh any benefit we can preſume by our meddling to procure.

5. We ſhould not indeed ever in matters of indifferent and innocent nature ſo far meddle, as, without conſiderable reaſon or need, to infringe any man's liberty, to croſs his humour, to obſtruct his pleaſure, however diſcordant theſe may be to our judgment and palate. Every man hath a particular guſt for diet, for garb, for divertiſements and diſports, (ariſing from particular complexion, or other unaccountable cauſes,) and fit it is that he ſhould ſatisfy it; it is enough that what he doth ſeemeth good, and reliſheth to himſelf: if we check him therein, we ſhall ſeem impertinent and troubleſome, and therefore we ſhall really be ſo; for it is not our office to be taſters, to be dreſſers, to be maſters of the ſports to all men: we in ſuch matters would pleaſe our own fancy, and therefore we ſhould not about them offend others; 'tis incivility, 'tis injuſtice to do it.

6. We ſhould never offer to put a force upon any man's inclination, or ſtrive to bend it unto a compliance with ours; in attempting that we ſhould commonly be diſappointed, and we ſhall never come fairly off: for ſome are ſo tough they will never yield to us; none will comply againſt the grain, without regret and diſpleaſure: if you extort a compliance with

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with your deſire, you thereby do loſe their good opi- SERM.
nion and good-will; for no man liketh to be over- XVIII.
borne with violence or importunity.

7. We ſhould not in converſation meddle ſo as to impoſe our opinions and conceits upon others: in converſation with our equals, we have a liberty to propound our judgment, and declare our reaſons for it; but if our judgment doth not take, nor our reaſons perſuade, we ſhould have done; to preſs farther is rude, to be diſpleaſed for it is vain, to be angry or violent is unjuſt; for by the law of converſation every man taketh himſelf to have an abſolute right to uſe and follow his own reaſon; and he that affects to deprive any man thereof, will paſs for a petty tyrant, a clown, or an idiot. To retain the ſatisfaction which our own perſuaſion affordeth, is enough to content a juſt and ſober mind, without triumphing over the underſtandings of others.

8. We ſhould not ordinarily in converſe affect or undertake to teach; for this implies a pretence to a kind of ſuperiority, and a preferring ourſelves to others in wiſdom; which argueth vanity, and is offenſive to thoſe with whom we converſe, who care not to be dealt with as diſciples or underlings. We may with our equals modeſtly diſpute the caſe upon even ground, as fellow-ſtudents of knowledge, or advocates of truth; but we muſt not peremptorily dictate, or pronounce with authority, like maſters or judges.

9. We ſhould indeed be cautious of interrupting any man's diſcourſe, or of taking his words out of his mouth: for this is a rude way of diſpoſſeſſing men of that which by common law of ſociety they ſuppoſe themſelves to enjoy, ſpeaking their mind through, and perfecting their diſcourſe; 'tis an implicit accuſation of impertinency or weakneſs in their ſpeech, 'tis an argument that we deem ourſelves wiſer than they, or able to ſpeak more to the purpoſe; it is therefore an unſociable and diſtaſteful practice.

Nec quid agatur in alia domus alia per te noverit. *Hier. Ep.* 2.

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10. We ſhould be careful of intrenching upon any man's modeſty in any way, either of commendation or diſpraiſe, ſo as to put him to the bluſh, or to expoſe him unto ſcorn. Sober men care not to be the ſubjects of talk; no man can endure to be the object of ſport: we ſhould not therefore thruſt any man upon the ſtage; 'tis vexatious, and therefore always diſcourteous, ſometimes very injurious.

11. It is good to be very ſtaunch and cautious of talking about other men and their concernments, in way of paſſing characters on them, or deſcanting upon their proceedings for want of other diſcourſe: this is the common refuge of idleneſs, and the practice of fiddling goſſips, who, becauſe they will do nothing themſelves, muſt be reflecting upon the doings of others; and that they may not ſay nothing, will talk impertinently: φλύαροι καὶ περίεργοι, St. Paul well coupleth together, that is, frivolous *tattlers and buſy-bodies*; *and withal* (ſaith he of ſuch goſſiping women, 1 Tim. v. 13.) *they learn to be idle, wandering about from houſe to houſe; and not only idle, but tatlers alſo, and buſy-bodies, ſpeaking things which they ought not.* To affect talking about others, is indeed a great temptation to ſpeaking things which we ought not to ſpeak, words of unjuſt and uncharitable obloquy.

12. Farther, we ſhould not be inquiſitive into the deſigns of men, for this (beſide the vain curioſity and impertinency of ſo doing) is to aſſail their modeſty, and an adventure to vex both them and ourſelves: thy neighbour perhaps (as moſt adviſed men are) is deſirous to keep his purpoſe cloſe to himſelf; then by inquiry thou either forceſt him unwillingly to diſcloſe what he would not, or to give thee a repulſe, which he liketh not to do; and which whenever he doth he is diſpleaſed: what is pumped out comes up againſt nature, and bringeth regret with it; and if we cannot get any thing out, we yet cauſe diſturbance within; and ourſelves are not well ſatisfied in the diſappointment.

Percontatorem fugito.

Φιλοπευγία τὰν ἐν ἀποκρύψει.

13. We

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13. We ſhould not preſs into the retirements of men; to do ſo is not only immodeſt and rude, but unjuſt: 'tis immodeſt to deſire to know from any man what he is aſhamed or unwilling to ſhew: 'tis rude to diſturb any man in the enjoyment of his lawful freedom, to interrupt him in his converſation with himſelf, to obſtruct his private ſatisfactions: 'tis unjuſt to bereave a man of that leiſure and opportunity which he poſſeſſeth, of doing that which he beſt liketh, and perhaps is greatly concerned in; of enjoying his own thoughts, of meditating upon his concerns, of examining his ways, of compoſing his paſſions, of ſtudying truth, of devotion and intercourſe with his God, of contriving and carrying on in any wiſe the welfare of his own ſoul. Why doth he retire, but to ſhun diverſion, or that he may be maſter of his time and thoughts? Why then are we ſo unkind, or ſo unjuſt, as to deprive him of thoſe contents and advantages?

Arcanum neque tu ſcrutaberis ullius unquam, Commiſſumque teges, et vino tortus et ira.

14. We ſhould not pry or peep into men's ſecrets; it is a practice upon many accounts blameable.

It is commonly impertinent curioſity; for men hide things, becauſe they do not think others concerned to know them; the concealment argueth their opinion to be ſuch, and conſequently that he is fondly curious who would ſearch into them: *Why* (ſaid he well to one, who, ſeeing him carry a baſket covered, did aſk what was in it) *doſt thou ſeek to know, when thou ſeeſt it covered, that thou mayeſt not know*[c]*?*

It is foully diſcourteous, becauſe offenſively depriving men of the ſatisfaction they take in concealing their matters; encroaching upon the innocent freedoms which they would enjoy, without rendering account to any; treſpaſſing upon their baſhfulneſs, or fruſtrating their diſcretion; for therefore men

[c] Τὸ δ' Αἰγυπτίῳ χάριεν πρὸς τ ἱρωτῶντα τί φέρει συγκεκαλυμμένον, διὰ τᾶτο συγκεκάλυπται. *Plut.* περὶ πολυπρ.

chooſe

SERM. XVIII. chooſe to keep things cloſe, becauſe they like not, or judge it not expedient to declare them. *Take no heed unto all words that are ſpoken, leſt thou hear thy ſervant curſe thee.*

Eccleſ. vii. 21.

It is alſo groſsly injurious to deal thus, for it is a robbery of what is moſt dear to men; which they with more care reſerve and guard, than they do their gold or their jewels; ſo that to break open the cloſet of a man's breaſt, to ranſack his mind, to pilfer away his thoughts, his affections, his purpoſes, may well be deemed a worſe ſort of burglary or theft, than to break open doors, to rifle trunks, or to pick pockets.

It is a practice in the common opinion of men worthily eſteemed very diſhoneſt and treacherous; for men generally do ſuppoſe each other to be under a tacit, but well-underſtood compact, obliged mutually (as they tender greatly the retaining their own ſecrets, ſo) to abſtain from attempting to diſcover the ſecrets of others; to do otherwiſe is therefore taken for an act of perfidious enmity, and a violation of mutual confidence.

In fine, to peep into chinks, to liſten at doors or windows, to mind whiſpers, to dive into letters and papers, and the like practices, are the practices of inſidious eves-droppers, ſpies, and ſycophants, which common humanity will not endure.

Yea, if the knowledge of what our neighbour would conceal doth caſually arrive to us, it is adviſable to ſmother it, 'tis inhumanity to reveal it to his prejudice. *To reveal ſecrets*, is a practice condemned in Scripture as odious and baſe. *He that goeth about as a tale-bearer, revealeth ſecrets: A tale-bearer revealeth ſecrets; but he that is of a faithful ſpirit concealeth the matter.*

Prov. xx. 19. Prov. xi. 13.

Not to take up, or ſcatter reports prejudicial. Ecclus. xix. 7. 10.

Μηδέποτε δευτερώσης λόγον—Ἀκήκοας λόγον; συναποθανέτω σοι.

A wiſe man would not willingly any wiſe know the ſecrets of others, but gladly would ſhun them, although

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although offering themſelves to his knowledge; that SERM. he may be freed from the burden of keeping them, XVIII. and the danger of venting them, to the diſtaſte, wrong, or prejudice of others: and he is commended for his diſcretion, who, to a prince aſking him, *What of his he ſhould impart to him?* replied, *Whatever you pleaſe, except your ſecrets* [f]. Them he well thought unſafe to keep, and dangerous to utter. How fooliſh then is it voluntarily to intrude, or carefully to ſearch into them!

15. We ſhould not lie in wait to ſurpriſe or catch any man at advantage, to overthrow him when he trips, to inſult upon his miſtake or his diſaſter; to do thus is always ill manners, 'tis ſometimes barbarous inhumanity. Goodneſs in ſuch caſes would diſpoſe a man to ſupport, relieve, and comfort another, if he demandeth, or his caſe needeth ſuch meddling.

16. Laſtly, we ſhould never, at leaſt with much earneſtneſs, meddle with affairs more properly belonging to others, and which we do not, or may not handſomely pretend to underſtand ſo well as others: ſuch are affairs beſide our profeſſion, which if we underſtand not, 'tis a folly, in a peremptory manner, to treat of them; if we do underſtand them, 'tis yet indecent to conteſt or dictate about them, in the preſence at leaſt of thoſe who profeſs them: thus ſhould private men beware (at leaſt in that magiſterial or eager way) to meddle with political affairs, illiterate men with ſcholaſtical, laymen with theological, unexperienced men with any ſuch matters, the comprehenſion whereof dependeth upon ſkill and exerciſe: no man ſhould be forward to meddle with things extraneous to his way and calling: doing ſo is wont to create much offence, it hath uſually much immodeſty and much folly in it; often it containeth much injuſtice.

[f] Philippides apud Plut. in Apoph. ad Lyſimach. *Τινός σοι, εἶπεν, τῶν ἐμῶν μεταδῶ; κακεῖνος, Οὐ βέλει πολὺν τῶν ἀποῤῥήτων.*

Theſe

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SERM. XVIII. Theſe are ſome more general rules concerning the matter in hand: I ſhould now (if time did permit) inſiſt upon ſome particular kinds of meddling, *(advice, reproof, interpoſing in conteſts:)* but in regard to your patience, I ſhall proceed no farther at preſent.

SERMON

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SERMON XIX.

Of Quietneſs, and doing our own Buſineſs.

1 THESS. iv. 11.

And that ye ſtudy to be quiet, and to do your own buſineſs.

IN a former diſcourſe upon theſe words, I have already ſhewed, SERM. XIX.

I. In what caſes it is allowable or commendable to meddle with the affairs of others.

II. Next, I propounded ſome general rules concerning this matter, according to which we may diſcern in what caſes meddling with the affairs of others is commonly blameable. Thus far I have proceeded.

III. I ſhall now give ſome directions concerning particular kinds of meddling. And becauſe they are many, I ſhall at preſent only inſiſt upon three; (referring others to other occaſions;) they are, *advice*, *reproof*, *interpoſing in conteſts*, and contentions.

I. As to meddling in *advice*, we may do well to obſerve theſe directions.

1. Adviſe not (except upon call) a ſuperior, or one more eminent than thyſelf in authority, in dignity, or in age: for he that offereth to adviſe, doth thereby

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SERM. XIX. thereby claim to himſelf a kind of ſuperiority, or excellence, above another; and it is not well conſiſtent with the reverence and reſpect due to our betters to ſeem to do ſo. They ſhould be wiſer than we; at leaſt it becometh us not to declare we think they are not. If they aſk advice, we may without preſumption give it, ſuppoſing it to be not ſo much their defect of knowledge as prudent caution, which maketh them willing to hear what any man can ſay to the caſe: but to obtrude it on them argueth we think them to need it, and ourſelves able to direct them; which is preſumption, and will paſs for arrogance.

2. We ſhould not indeed, with any violence or importunity, thruſt advice upon our equals, or upon any man not ſubject to our charge, who is unwilling to receive it; for this is alſo an exalting ourſelves in ſkill and wiſdom above him, and implieth a contemptuous opinion concerning his knowledge; that he is ſo weak as to need advice, and yet more weak in not ſeeking it when needful from us; which practice conſiſteth not with modeſty, and needs muſt breed offence: it is indeed unjuſt; for every man of right is to be allowed to act by his own advice, and to chooſe his own counſellors.

3. Be not obſtinate in preſſing advice: if he that aſketh thy counſel do not like it, deſiſt from urging farther, and reſt content. If thou haſt performed the part of a faithful friend, of a good man, of a charitable Chriſtian, in adviſing what ſeemeth beſt to thee, that may abundantly ſatisfy thee; for the reſt, *ipſe viderit*, 'tis his concernment more than thine: if thou pretendeſt that he muſt follow thy advice, or art diſpleaſed becauſe he doth not ſo, thou makeſt thyſelf a commander, not a counſellor; the which to appoint thee, was beſide his intention; he meant to ſeek thy help, not to forfeit his own liberty; and thou art not juſt in pretending to ſo much.

4. Affect not to be a counſellor, nor let any conſiderations (except of friendſhip, humanity, or charity,)

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rity,) eaſily diſpoſe thee to accept the office: it is not worth the while to undertake it as a matter of reputation, or becauſe it ſeemeth to argue a good opinion concerning thy ſkill and ability; for it is a critical and dangerous thing to adviſe, becauſe if the buſineſs ſucceedeth well according to thy advice, the principal uſually carrieth away the profit and the praiſe; his judgment, his induſtry, his fortune are applauded; little commendation or benefit acrueth to the counſellor. But if it proſper not, the main weight of blame is ſurely laid upon him that adviſed the courſe. If you (ſaith the party, and ſay the lookers on) had not thus directed, it had not thus fallen out. SERM. XIX.

5. Wherefore it is commonly expedient not to adviſe otherwiſe than with reſervation and diffidence: it is, we may ſay, the moſt probable courſe I know, but I queſtion whether it will ſucceed; I hope well of it, but do not thoroughly confide therein. This modeſt and diſcreet way, whatever the event ſhall be, will ſhelter thee from blame; yea, will advance the reputation of thy ſagacity; for if it fail, thy reaſon to ſuſpect will be approved; if it proſper, the goodneſs of thy judgment will be applauded: whereas the confident director, if ſucceſs croſſeth his advice, is exclaimed upon for his raſhneſs; if ſucceſs favoureth, he is not yet admired for his wiſdom, becauſe he ſeemed to be ſure; it being more admirable to gueſs the beſt among doubtful things, than to determine that which is certain. So much for meddling about *advice*.

II. For *reproof*, (which is neceſſary, and a duty upon ſome occaſions,) we may do well to follow theſe directions.

1. Reprove not a ſuperior; for it is exerciſing a power over him, and a puniſhing him; we thereby therefore do ſoar above our pitch, we confound ranks, and pervert the order ſettled among men; the practice containeth irreverence and preſumption, it ſeemeth Levit. xix. 17. Epheſ. v. 11.

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SERM. XIX. ſeemeth injurious, and is ever odious. What the miniſters of God, or ſpiritual paſtors, do in this kind, they do it by ſpecial commiſſion, or inſtinct, (as the prophets in reprehending princes and prieſts, as St. John Baptiſt in reproving Herod;) or as ordinary ſuperiors in the caſe of ſpiritual guidance, being *ſet over us* for that purpoſe, and *watching for our ſouls*, for which *they muſt render an account:* yet they muſt do it with great moderation and diſcretion: Πρεσβυτέρῳ μὴ ἐπιπλήξῃς, *Rebuke not an elder*, (or one more aged than thyſelf) *but intreat him as a father*, (that is, adviſe him in the moſt reſpectful and gentle manner,) is the charge of St. Paul to biſhop Timothy. In caſe of grievance or ſcandal, it becometh inferiors not proudly or peremptorily to criminate and tax, but humbly to remonſtrate and ſupplicate for redreſs.

Heb. xiii. 17.

1 Tim. v. 1.

2. Reprove not raſhly, and without certain cognizance of the fact; for to reprove for things not done, or (which in moral reckoning is the ſame) for things not apparent, is both unjuſt, and argueth a malignant diſpoſition: it is unjuſt to puniſh ſo much as the modeſty of any man, without clear evidence and proof; it is malignity to ſuſpect a man of ill, it is calumny to charge blame on him upon ſlender pretences, or doubtful ſurmiſes.

3. Reprove not alſo raſhly as to the point of right, or without being able to convince the matter to be aſſuredly culpable: to reprove for things not bad, or not unqueſtionably ſuch (for things that are, or perhaps may be indifferent and innocent) is alſo unjuſt, and ſignifieth a tyrannical diſpoſition: 'tis unjuſt anywiſe to puniſh a man without clear warrant of law: 'tis tyrannical to impoſe upon men our conceit, or to perſecute them for uſing their liberty, following their judgment, or enjoying their humour; which in effect we do when we reprove them for that which we cannot prove blameable: 'tis, St. James ſaith, *a judging the law*, or charging it with defect, when we condemn perſons for things not prohibited

Jam. iv. 11.

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bited by it: *He*, ſaith the Apoſtle, *that ſpeaketh againſt his brother, and judgeth his brother, ſpeaketh againſt the law, and judgeth the law.* SERM. XIX.

Both theſe kinds of raſh reproof are very inconvenient, as breeding needleſs offence and endleſs contention; for whoever is thus taxed, will certainly take it ill, and will contend in his own defence: no man patiently, for no ſufficient cauſe or ſure ground, will lie under the ſtroke of reproof, which always ſmarteth, but then enrageth when it is ſuppoſed to be inflicted unjuſtly or maliciouſly: even thoſe who contentedly will bear friendly reproof, can worſe brook to be cauſeleſsly taxed.

4. Reprove not for ſlight matters, for ſuch faults or defects as proceed from natural frailty, from inadvertency, from miſtake in matters of ſmall conſequence; for it is hard to be juſt in ſuch reproof, or ſo to temper it as not to exceed the meaſure of blame due to ſuch faults: they occur ſo often, that we ſhould never ceaſe to be carping, if we do it upon ſuch occaſions; it is not worth the while, it is not handſome to ſeem diſpleaſed with ſuch little things; it is ſpending our artillery upon a game not worth the killing. Reproof is too grave and ſtately a thing to be proſtituted upon ſo mean things; to uſe it upon ſmall cauſe, derogateth from its weight, when there is conſiderable reaſon for it; friendſhip, charity, and humanity ſhould cover ſuch offences. In fine, it is unſeemly to reprove men for ſuch things as all men, as themſelves are ſo continually ſubject unto: it is therefore better to let ſuch things paſs without any mark of diſpleaſure or diſlike.

Mitem animum, et mores modicis erroribus æquos. *Juv. Sat.* 14.

5. Reprove not unſeaſonably; not when a perſon is indiſpoſed to bear reproof, or unfit to profit thereby; not when there is likely to be no good effect come from it; when thou ſhalt only thereby conjure up an evil ſpirit of diſpleaſure and enmity againſt thyſelf. Reproof is a thing of itſelf not good or pleaſant, but ſometimes needful, becauſe

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SERM. XIX. wholeſome and good, in order to the end; it ſhould therefore be adminiſtered as phyſic, then only when the patient is fit to receive it, and it may ſerve to correct his diſtemper; otherwiſe you will only make him more ſick, and very angry.

It is ever almoſt unſeaſonable to reprove ſome perſons, as ſcorners, impudent, incorrigibly profligate perſons, who will hate the reprover without regarding the reproof: *He that reproveth a ſcorner getteth to himſelf ſhame; and he that rebuketh a wicked man getteth himſelf a blot. Reprove not a ſcorner, leſt he hate thee.* To be maligned, to be derided, to be aſperſed with reproach and ſlander, is all one ſhall get by reproving ſuch perſons; it is both proſtituting good advice, and expoſing one's ſelf to miſchief, as our Saviour intimateth in that prohibition: *Give not that which is holy unto dogs, neither caſt your pearls before ſwine, leſt they trample them under their feet, and turn again and rend you.*

Prov. ix. 7, 8. xv. 12. Matt. vii. 6.

As ſuch men ever, ſo moſt men in ſome ſeaſons are uncapable of reproof; ſo are men in calamity, who are diſcompoſed by grief, the which is rather to be mitigated by comfort than increaſed and exaſperated by blame; ſo are men in a paſſion, who have no ears to hear, no reaſon to judge, no will to comply with advice: reproof is apt to produce rather anger and ill-blood, than any contrition or kindly remorſe in perſons ſo affected.

It is alſo uſually not ſeaſonable to reprove men publicly, when their modeſty is highly put to it, and their reputation grievouſly ſuffereth; for this is an extreme ſort of puniſhment, and is taken for needleſs; it is extreme, becauſe men had rather ſuffer any way than in their honour; it is deemed needleſs, becauſe it may be adminiſtered privately.

6. Reprove mildly and ſweetly, in the calmeſt manner, in the gentleſt terms; not in a haughty or imperious way, not haſtily or fiercely; not with ſour looks, or in bitter language; for theſe ways do beget

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beget all the evil, and hinder the beſt effects of re- SERM.
proof: they do certainly enflame and diſturb the XIX.
perſon reproved; they breed wrath, diſdain, and
hatred againſt the reprover; but do not ſo well enlighten the man to ſee his error, or affect him with kindly ſenſe of his miſcarriage, or diſpoſe him to correct his fault: ſuch reproofs look rather like the wounds and perſecutions of enmity, than as remedies miniſtered by a friendly hand; they harden men with ſtomach and ſcorn to mend upon ſuch occaſion. If reproof doth not ſavour of humanity, it ſignifieth nothing; it muſt be like a bitter pill wrapped in gold, and tempered with ſugar, otherwiſe it will not go down, or work effectually.

7. Affect not to be reprehenſive; ſeem not willingly to undertake the place of a reprover; appear to be merely drawn thereto by ſenſe of duty, or exigency of friendſhip, or conſtraint of charity and good-will. For to affect reproving, is a ſign of ill-nature and arrogance, that we delight to obſerve the faults, that we love to inſult upon the infirmities and infelicities of other men; which is the part of a domineering and cruel humour. A truly good man indeed would be glad to be excuſed from the office; it is the moſt unpleaſant thing he can do to be raking in men's ſores, and cauſing ſmart to his neighbours; far more gladly therefore would he be commending their good deeds, and cheriſhing their virtue. Nothing therefore but conſcience and charity can put him on this employment. But ſo much for meddling in reproof.

III. Another kind of meddling is, *interpoſing in the conteſts* and contentions of others. As to this, we may, briefly, do well to obſerve theſe directions.

1. We ſhould never meddle, ſo as to raiſe diſſenſions, or to do ſuch things as breed them: we ſhould by no means create miſunderſtandings, or diſtaſtes, between our neighbours: we ſhould not inſtil jealouſies, or ſurmiſes: we ſhould not miſcon-

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SERM. XIX. ſtrue words or actions, to an offenſive ſenſe or conſequence: we ſhould not convey ſpiteful tales: we ſhould not diſcloſe the ſecrets of one to another. Theſe practices engender enmity and ſtrife among men; and are therefore inhuman, or rather diabolical; for the devil is the great make-bate in the world.

2. We ſhould not foment diſſenſions already commenced, blowing up the coals that are kindled, by abetting the ſtrife, or aggravating the cauſes thereof; it is not good to ſtrengthen the quarrel, by ſiding with one part, except that part be notoriouſly oppreſſed or abuſed: in ſuch a caſe indeed, when juſtice calleth for them, we may lend our advice and aſſiſtance; and may bear the inconvenience of being engaged, as Moſes honeſtly and generouſly did, when he ſuccoured his brother that ſuffered wrong; otherwiſe it is adviſable to keep ourſelves out of the fray, that we do not encourage it by our taking part, and involve ourſelves in the miſchiefs of it.

3. Eſpecially we ſhould not make ourſelves parties in any faction, where both ſides are eager and paſſionate; for then even they who have the juſter cauſe are wont to do unjuſt things, in which it is hard for any man engaged not to have ſhare, at leaſt not to undergo the imputation of them: it is wiſdom therefore in ſuch caſes to hold off, and to retain a kind of indifferency; to meddle with them is, (as the Wiſe Man ſaith) to *take a dog by the ears*; which he that doth, can hardly take care enough of his fingers.

Prov. xxvi. 17.

4. We ſhould not interpoſe ourſelves (without invitation) to be arbitrators in points of difference: we may cautiouſly mediate perhaps, or adviſe to agreement; but not pretend as judges with authority to decide the controverſy: this ſavoureth of arrogance, this will work trouble to us, and bring the diſpleaſure of both ſides upon us; it is hard, in doing ſo, to avoid becoming parties, and offending one ſide.

οἱ ἐν μέσῳ ὄντες; ἀδύνατοι ἀπ' ἀμφοτέρων. *Ariſt.*

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Our Lord therefore did, we ſee, wave this office, and put off the invitation with a, *Who made me a divider, or a judge between you?* SERM. XIX.

5. If we would at all meddle in theſe caſes, it ſhould be only in endeavouring, by the moſt fair and prudent means, to renew peace, and reconcile the diſſenters; if we can by exhortation and perſuaſion to peace, by removing miſpriſions, by repreſenting things handſomely, by mitigating their paſſions, bring them to good terms, this is a laudable meddling, this is a bleſſed practice. So I leave this particular, and finiſh the directive part of my diſcourſe.

IV. I ſhall now farther only briefly propoſe ſome conſiderations inducing to quietneſs, and diſſuaſive from pragmaticalneſs; ſuch as ariſe from the nature, properties, cauſes, and effects of each; ſerving to commend the one, and diſparage the other.

1. Conſider that quietneſs is juſt and equal, pragmaticalneſs is injurious. When we contain ourſelves quiet, and mind only our own buſineſs, we allow every man his right, we harm no man's repute; we keep ourſelves within our bounds, and treſpaſs not on the place or intereſt of our neighbour; we diſturb not the right order and courſe of things: but in being pragmatical, we do wrongfully deprive others of their right and liberty to manage their buſineſs; we prejudice their credit, implicitly charging them with weakneſs and incapacity to diſpatch their affairs without our direction; we therefore, upon our own unequal and partial judgment, do prefer and advance ourſelves above them; we aſſume to ourſelves in many reſpects more than our due, withdrawing it from others. In fine, no man loveth that others ſhould invade his office, or intrude into his buſineſs; therefore in juſtice every man ſhould forbear doing ſo toward others.

2. Quietneſs ſignifieth humility, modeſty, and ſobriety of mind; that we conceit not ourſelves more wiſe than our neighbour; that we allow every man

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SERM. XIX. his ſhare of diſcretion; that we take others for able and ſkilful enough to underſtand and manage their own affairs: but pragmaticalneſs argueth much overweening and arrogance; that we take ourſelves for the only men of wiſdom, at leaſt for more wiſe than thoſe, into whoſe buſineſs we thruſt ourſelves.

3. Quietneſs is beneficial to the world, preſerving the general order of things, diſpoſing men to keep within their rank and ſtation, and within the ſphere of their power and ability, regularly attending to the work and buſineſs proper to them; whereby as themſelves do well, ſo the public doth thrive: but pragmaticalneſs diſturbeth the world, confounding things, removing the diſtinction between ſuperior, inferior, and equal, rendering each man's buſineſs uncertain; while ſome undertake that which belongeth not to them: one buſy-body often (as we find by experience) is able to diſturb and peſter a whole ſociety.

4. Quietneſs preſerveth concord and amity: for no man is thereby provoked, being ſuffered undiſturbedly to proceed in his courſe, according to his mind and pleaſure: but pragmaticalneſs breedeth diſſenſions and feuds: for all men are ready to quarrel with thoſe, who offer to control them, or croſs them in their way; every man will be zealous in maintaining his privilege of chooſing, and acting according to his choice; and cannot but oppoſe thoſe, who attempt to bereave him of it; whence between the buſy-body aſſailing, and others defending their liberty, combuſtions muſt ariſe.

5. Quietneſs to the perſon endued with it, or practiſing it, begetteth tranquillity and peace; for he that letteth others alone, and cometh in no man's way, no man will be apt to diſquiet or croſs him; he keepeth himſelf out of broils and factions: but the buſy-body createth vexation and trouble to himſelf; others will be ready to moleſt him in his proceedings, becauſe he diſturbeth them in theirs: he that

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that will have a ſickle in another's corn, or an oar in every man's boat, no wonder if his fingers be rapped; men do not more naturally bruſh off flies, which buz about their ears, ſit upon their faces or hands, and ſting or tickle them, than they ſtrive to drive away clamorous and encroaching buſy-bodies. *Let*, ſaith St. Peter, *none of you ſuffer as a buſy-body in other men's matters*; it is, he intimateth, a practice whereby a man becometh liable to ſuffer, or which men are apt to puniſh ſoundly: and ſo the Wiſe Man, implying the fondneſs and danger of it, *He*, ſaith he, *that paſſeth by, and meddleth with ſtrife not belonging to him, is like one that taketh a dog by the ears*; that is, without any probable good effect, he provoketh a creature that will ſnarl at him, and bite him. SERM. XIX. 1 Pet. iv. 15. Prov. xxvi. 17.

6. Quietneſs is a decent and lovely thing, as ſignifying good diſpoſition, and producing good effects; but pragmaticalneſs is ugly and odious. Every man gladly would be a neighbour to a quiet perſon, as who by the ſteady calmneſs and ſmoothneſs of his humour, the inoffenſive ſtillneſs and ſweetneſs of his demeanour, doth afford all the pleaſure of converſation, without any croſs or trouble. But no man willingly would dwell by him, who is apt ever to be infeſting him by his turbulent humour, his obſtreperous talk, his tumultuous and furious carriage; who, upon all occaſions, without invitation or conſent, will be thruſting in his eyes, his tongue, his hand; prying into all that is done, dictating this or that courſe, taxing all proceeding, uſurping a kind of juriſdiction over him and his actions: no man will like, or can well endure ſuch a neighbour. It is commonly obſerved, that pride is not only abominable to God, but loathſome to man; and of all prides, this is the moſt offenſive and odious: for the pride which keepeth at home, within a man's heart or fancy, not iſſuing forth to trouble others, may in-

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deed well be deſpiſed, as hugely ſilly and vain; but that which breaketh out to the diſturbance and vexation of others, is hated as moleſtful and miſchievous.

7. Quietneſs adorneth any profeſſion, bringing credit, reſpect, and love thereto; but pragmaticalneſs is ſcandalous, and procureth odium to any party or cauſe: men uſually do cloak their pragmatical behaviour with pretences of zeal for public good, or of kindneſs to ſome party, which they have eſpouſed; but thereby they do really caſt reproach, and draw prejudice upon their ſide: if it be a good cauſe, they do thereby wrong it, making it to partake of the blame incident to ſuch carriage, as if it did produce or allow diſorder; if it be a bad cauſe, they wrong themſelves, aggravating the guilt of their adherence thereto; for it is a leſs fault to be calm and remiſs in an ill way, than buſy or violent in promoting it. Nothing hath wrought more prejudice to religion, or hath brought more diſparagement upon truth, than boiſterous and unſeaſonable zeal; pretending in ways of paſſion, of fierceneſs, of rudeneſs to advance them: a quiet ſectary doth to moſt men's fancy appear more lovely, than he that is furiouſly and factiouſly orthodox: the ornament of *a meek and quiet ſpirit is*, ſaith St. Peter, *in God's ſight, of great price*; and it is alſo very eſtimable in the opinion of men.

1 Pet. iii. 4.

Τῷ ὄντι φαίνεται ὁ κατὰ τὴν ἡσυχίαν βίος ἀκινδύνως τε καὶ ἀσφαλὲς ἔχειν. *Chryſ. apud Plut.*

8. Quiet is a ſafe practice, keeping men not only from needleſs encumbrances of buſineſs, but from the hazards of it, or being charged with its bad ſucceſs: but pragmaticalneſs is dangerous; for if things go ill, the meddler ſurely will be loaded with the blame; the profit and commendation of proſperities will accrue to the perſons immediately concerned; but the diſaſter and damage will be imputed to thoſe who meddled in the buſineſs; to excuſe or eaſe themſelves, men will caſt the diſgrace on thoſe who did pro-

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project or further the undertaking: he therefore that would be ſecure, let him be quiet; he that loveth peril and trouble, let him be pragmatical. SERM. XIX.

9. It is conſequently a great point of diſcretion to be quiet, it yielding a man peace and ſafety without any trouble; and it is a manifeſt folly to be pragmatical, it being only with care, pains, and trouble, to ſeek diſſatisfaction to others, and danger to himſelf; it being alſo to affect many not only inconveniences, but impoſſibilities.

Is it poſſible for any man to graſp or compaſs an infinity of buſineſs? Yet this the pragmatical man ſeemeth to drive at; for the buſineſſes of other men are infinite, and into that abyſs he plungeth himſelf, who paſſeth beyond his own bounds; by the ſame reaſon that he meddleth with any beſide his own, he may undertake all the affairs in the world; ſo he is ſure to have work enough, but fruit ſurely little enough of his pains.

Is it imaginable, that we can eaſily bring others to our bent, or induce men to ſubmit their buſineſs to our judgment and humour? Will not he that attempteth ſuch things, aſſuredly expoſe himſelf to diſappointment and regret? Is it not therefore wiſdom to let every man have his own way, and purſue his concernments without any check or control from us?

10. We may alſo conſider, that every man hath buſineſs of his own ſufficient to employ him; to exerciſe his mind, to exhauſt his care and pains, to take up all his time and leiſure. To ſtudy his own near concernments, to provide for the neceſſities and conveniences of his life, to look to the intereſts of his ſoul, to be diligent in his calling, to diſcharge faithfully and carefully all his duties relating to God and man, will abundantly employ a man; well it is if ſome of them do not encumber and diſtract him: he that will ſet himſelf with all his might to perform theſe things, will find enough to do; he need not ſeek farther

ὁ πολὺς πράσσων πολὺς ἁμαρτάνει βροτῶν. *Eurip.*

Ἀπράγμονας εἶναι ἐκκλίνειν γὰρ τὸ καθῆκον. *Zenon. apud Laert. Chryſoſt. tom. ii. Eth. 64.*

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SERM. XIX. farther for work, he need not draw more trouble on him.

Seeing then every man hath burthen enough on his ſhoulders, impoſed by God and nature, it is vain to take on him more load, by engaging himſelf in the affairs of others; he will thence be forced, either to ſhake off his own buſineſs, or to become over-burthened and oppreſſed with more than he can bear. It is indeed hence obſervable, and it needs muſt happen, that thoſe who meddle with the buſineſs of others are wont to neglect their own; they that are much abroad can ſeldom be at home; they that know others moſt are leaſt acquainted with themſelves: And the wiſe Hebrew, *The wiſdom of a learned man comes by opportunity of leiſure,* (σοφία σοφιστῆ ἐν εὐκαιρίᾳ σχολῆς,) *and he that hath little buſineſs ſhall be wiſe*; (ὁ ἐλασσούμενος πράξει αὐτὸς σοφισθήσεται.) Whence it is ſcarce poſſible that a pragmatical man ſhould be a good man; that is, ſuch an one who honeſtly and carefully performeth the duties incumbent on him.

Eccluſ. xxxviii. 26.

Philoſophers therefore generally have adviſed men to ſhun needleſs occupations, as the certain impediments of a good and happy life; they bid us endeavour ἁπλοῦν ἑαυτὸν, *to ſimplify ourſelves*, or to get into a condition requiring of us the leaſt that can be to do: St. Paul intended the ſame when he adviſed us, μὴ ἐμπλέκεσθαι ταῖς τοῦ βίου πραγματείαις, *not to be entangled in the negotiations of life:* and our Saviour, when he touched Martha for *being troubled about many things.* So far therefore we ſhould be from taking in hand the affairs of other men, that we ſhould labour to contract our own, and reduce them to the feweſt that we can; otherwiſe we ſhall hardly attain wiſdom, or be able to perform our duty[a].

2 Tim. ii. 4.

Luke x. 41. περὶ πολλά.

[a] Ὁ σοφὸς, ἰδιοπράγμων, καὶ ἀπράγμων. *Democ. Sen. Ep.* 72, 22. Tertullian calleth Stoiciſm, Quietis magiſterium. *De Pall.* v.

11. But

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11. But ſuppoſe us to have much ſpare time, and to want buſineſs, ſo that we are to ſeek for divertiſement, and muſt for relief fly to curioſity; yet it is not adviſeable to meddle with the affairs of other men: there are divers other ways more innocent, more ſafe, more pleaſant, more advantageous to divert ourſelves, and ſatisfy curioſity [b].

Tacitus ſaith of the Stoics ſect. —quæ turbidos et negotiorum appetentes facit.

Nature offereth herſelf, and her inexhauſtible ſtore of appearances to our contemplation; we may, without any harm, and with much delight, ſurvey her rich varieties, examine her proceedings, pierce into her ſecrets. Every kind of animals, of plants, of minerals, of meteors preſenteth matter, wherewith innocently, pleaſantly, and profitably to entertain our minds. There are many noble ſciences, by applying our minds to the ſtudy whereof, we may not only divert them, but improve and cultivate them: the hiſtories of ages paſt, or relations concerning foreign countries, wherein the manners of men are deſcribed, and their actions reported, may afford us uſeful pleaſure and paſtime; thereby we may learn as much, and underſtand the world as well, as by the moſt curious enquiry into the preſent actions of men; there we may obſerve, we may ſcan, we may tax the proceedings of whom we pleaſe, without any danger or offence: there are extant numberleſs books, wherein the wiſeſt and moſt ingenious of men have laid open their hearts, and expoſed their moſt ſecret cogitations unto us; in purſuing them we may ſufficiently buſy ourſelves, and let our idle hours paſs gratefully; we may meddle with ourſelves, ſtudying our own diſpoſitions, examining our principles and purpoſes, reflecting on our thoughts, words, and actions; ſtriving thoroughly to underſtand ourſelves; to do this we have an unqueſtionable right,

[b] Omnium occupatorum conditio miſera eſt, eorum tamen miſerrima, qui ne ſuis quidem occupationibus laborant. *Sen. de Brev. Vitæ*, xix.

and

SERM. XIX. and by it we ſhall obtain vaſt benefit, much greater than we can hope to get by puddering in the deſigns or doings of others. Pragmaticalneſs then, as it is very dangerous and troubleſome, ſo it is perfectly needleſs; it is a kind of idleneſs, but of all idleneſs the moſt unreaſonable [c]: it is at leaſt worſe than idleneſs, in St. Gregory Nazianzen's opinion. For, *I had rather*, ſaid he, *be idle more than I ſhould, than over-buſy* [d]. Other conſiderations might be added: but theſe, I hope, may be ſufficient to reſtrain this practice, ſo unprofitable and uneaſy to ourſelves, and, for the moſt part, ſo injurious and troubleſome to others.

Now the God of peace make us perfect in every good word and work, through Jeſus Chriſt, to whom be glory for ever. Amen.

[c] Ἀνδρὶ Λυδῷ πραίγματα ἐκ ἦν, ἀλλ' αὐτὸς ἐξελθὼν ἐπρίατο. *Adag.* apud *Suidam.*

[d] Ἄργὸς εἶναι μᾶλλον τῆ δείλος, ἢ περίεργος δέχομαι. *Greg. Naz. Or.* 36.

SERMON

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SERMON XX.

Of a peaceable Temper and Carriage.

ROM. xii. 18.

If it be poſſible, as much as lieth in you, live peaceably with all men.

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THIS chapter containeth many excellent precepts and wholeſome advices (ſcarce any portion of holy Scripture ſo many in ſo little compaſs). From among them I have ſelected one, alas, but too ſeaſonable and pertinent to the unhappy condition of our diſtracted age, wherein to obſerve this and ſuch like injunctions, is by many eſteemed an impoſſibility, by others a wonder, by ſome a crime. It hath an apt coherence with, yet no neceſſary dependence upon, the parts adjoining; whence I may preſume to treat upon it diſtinctly by itſelf; and without farther preface or circumſtance we may conſider ſeveral particulars therein.

I. And firſt, concerning the advice itſelf, or the ſubſtance of the duty charged on us, Εἰρηνεύειν, *(to be in peace,* or *live peaceably,)* we may take notice, that whether, according to the more uſual acception, it be applied to the public eſtate of things, or as here doth relate only to private converſation, it doth import,

1. Not

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1. Not barely a negation of doing, or ſuffering harm, or an abſtinence from ſtrife and violence, (for a mere ſtrangeneſs this may be, a want of occaſion, or a truce, rather than a peace,) but a poſitive amity, and diſpoſition to perform ſuch kind offices, without which good correſpondence among men cannot ſubſiſt. For they who by reaſon of diſtance of place, non-acquaintance, or defect of opportunity, maintain no intercourſe, cannot properly be ſaid to be in peace with one another: but thoſe who have frequent occaſion of commerce, whoſe conditions require interchanges of courteſy and relief, who are ſome way obliged and diſpoſed to afford needful ſuccour, and ſafe retreat to each other; theſe may be ſaid to live in peace together, and theſe only, it being in a manner impoſſible, that they who are not diſpoſed to do good to others (if they have power and opportunity) ſhould long abſtain from doing harm.

2. Living peaceably implies not ſome few tranſitory performances, proceeding from caſual humour, or the like; but a conſtant, ſtable, and well-ſettled condition of being; a continual ceſſation from injury, and promptitude to do good offices. For as one blow doth not make a battle, nor one ſkirmiſh a war, ſo cannot ſingle forbearances from doing miſchief, or ſome few particular acts of kindneſs, (ſuch as mere ſtrangers may afford each other) be worthily ſtyled a being in peace: but an habitual inclination to theſe, a firm and durable eſtate of innocence and beneficence.

3. Living in peace ſuppoſes a reciprocal condition of being: not only a performing good, and forbearing to do bad offices, but a receiving the like treatment from others. For he, that being aſſaulted is conſtrained to ſtand upon his defence, may not be ſaid to be in peace, though his not being ſo (involuntarily) is not to be imputed to him.

4. Being in peace imports not only an outward ceſſation of violence and ſeeming demonſtration of amity,

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amity, but an inward will and reſolution to continue therein. For he that intends, when occaſion is preſented, to do miſchief to another, is nevertheleſs an enemy, becauſe more ſecret and dangerous: an ambuſcado is no leſs a piece of war, than confronting the enemy in open field. Proclaiming and denouncing ſignify, but good and ill intention conſtitute, and are the ſouls of peace and war. From theſe conſiderations we may infer a deſcription of being in peace, viz. that it is, to bear mutual good-will, to continue in amity, to maintain good correſpondence, to be upon terms of mutual courteſy and benevolence; to be diſpoſed to perform reciprocally all offices of humanity; aſſiſtance in need, comfort in ſorrow, relief in diſtreſs; to pleaſe and ſatisfy one another, by advancing the innocent delight, and promoting the juſt advantage of each other; to converſe with confidence and ſecurity, without ſuſpicion, on either hand, of any fraudulent, malicious, or hurtful practices againſt either: or negatively; not to be in a ſtate of enmity, perſonal hatred, pertinacious anger, jealouſy, envy, or ill-will; not to be apt to provoke, to reproach, to harm or hinder another, nor to have reaſonable grounds of expecting the ſame bad uſage from others; to be removed from danger of vexatious quarrels, intercourſe of odious language, offending others, or being diſquieted one's ſelf. This I take to be the meaning of living or being in peace, differing only in degree of obligation, and latitude of object, from the ſtate of friendſhip properly ſo called, and oppoſed to a condition of enmity, defiance, contention, hatred, ſuſpicion, animoſity.

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II. In the next place we may conſider the object of this duty, ſignified in thoſe words, *With all men*. We often meet in Scripture with exhortations directed peculiarly to Chriſtians, to be at peace among themſelves; as our Saviour lays this injunction upon his diſciples, εἰρηνεύετε ἐν ἀλλήλοις, *Have peace one with another*; inculcated by St. Paul upon the Theſſalonians Mark ix. 50. 1 Theſſ. v. 13.

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SERM. XX. nians in the ſame words: and the like we have in the ſecond Epiſtle to Timothy, chap. ii. ver. 22. *Follow righteouſneſs, faith, charity, peace with them that call upon the Lord out of a pure heart:* and to the Romans, (xiv. 19.) *Let us therefore follow after the things that make for peace, and things wherewith one may edify another.* But here the duty hath a more large and comprehenſive object; πάντες ἄνθρωποι, *all men:* as likewiſe it hath in the Epiſtle to the Hebrews, ch. xii. ver. 14. *Purſue peace with all men:* with all men, without any exception, with men of all nations, Jews and Gentiles, Greeks and Barbarians; of all ſects and religions; perſecuting Jews and idolatrous Heathens; (for of ſuch conſiſted the generality of men at that time;) and ſo St. Paul expreſsly in a like advice, (1 Cor. x. 32, 33. *Give no offence, neither to the Jews, nor to the Gentiles, nor to the Church of God; even as I pleaſe all men.*) And I may add by evident parity of reaſon, with men of all degrees and eſtates, high and low, noble and baſe, rich and poor; of all tempers and diſpoſitions, meek and angry, gentle and froward, pliable and perverſe; of all endowments, wiſe and fooliſh, virtuous and vicious; of all judgments and perſuaſions, orthodox and heretical, peaceable and ſchiſmatical perſons: this univerſally vaſt and boundleſs term, *All men*, contains them all. Neither is there any evading our obligation to this duty, by pretending about others, that they differ from us in humour and complexion of ſoul, that they entertain opinions irreconcileably contrary to ours; that they adhere to ſects and parties which we diſlike and diſavow; that they are not ſo virtuous, ſo religious, ſo holy as they ſhould be, or at leaſt not in ſuch a manner as we would have them; for be this allegation true or falſe, it will not excuſe us; while they are not diveſted of human nature, and can truly lay claim to the name and title of men, we are by virtue of this precept obliged to live peaceably with them.

Vid. Eph. iv. 3.

III. We may conſider the qualification of the duty here

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here expreſſed, and what thoſe words mean; *If it be poſſible, as much as lieth in you.* To which purpoſe we may advert, from our deſcription of living peaceably, that it conſiſts mainly of two parts: one *active*, or proceeding from us, and terminated on others—to bear good-will, to do good offices, to procure the profit, delight, and welfare, to abſtain from the diſpleaſure, damage, and diſturbance of others: the other *paſſive*, iſſuing from others, and terminated on ourſelves—that they be well affected toward us, inclinable to do us good, and nowiſe diſpoſed to wiſh, deſign, or bring any harm, trouble, or vexation upon us. Whereof the former is altogether in our power, conſiſting of acts or omiſſions depending upon our free choice and counſel; and we are directly obliged to it, by virtue of thoſe words, τὸ ἐξ ὑμῶν, *as much as lieth in you:* the latter is not fully ſo, yet commonly there be probable means of effecting it, which we are hence bound to uſe, though ſometimes they may fail of ſucceſs. For the words εἰ δυνατὸν, *if it be poſſible*, as they ſignify the utmoſt endeavour is to be employed, and that no difficulty (beneath the degree of impoſſibility) can diſcharge us from it; ſo they intimate plainly, that ſometime our labour may be loſt, and our purpoſe defeated; and that by the default of others it may be impoſſible we ſhould arrive to a peaceable condition of life with all men. However, by this rule we are directed not only ourſelves not to infringe the terms of peace toward others, but to endeavour earneſtly by all honeſt and prudent means to obtain the good-will, favour, and reſpect of others, by which they may be diſpoſed to all friendly correſpondence with us, and not to diſturb the quiet and tranquillity of our lives.

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Having thus by way of explication ſuperficially glanced upon the words, we will proceed to a more large and punctual review of them; and ſhall conſider more diſtinctly the particulars groſsly mentioned: and,

I. What

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I. What thoſe eſpecial duties are, included in this more comprehenſive one of living peaceably with all men; both thoſe which are directly required of us, as the neceſſary cauſes or immediate reſults of a peaceable diſpoſition in us toward others; and alſo thoſe which are to be performed by us, as juſt and reaſonable means conducible to beget or preſerve in others a peaceable inclination toward us: theſe I ſhall conſider promiſcuouſly: and,

1. We are by this precept directly obliged heartily to love, that is, to bear good-will to, to wiſh well to, to rejoice in the welfare, and commiſerate the adverſities of all men: at leaſt not to hate, or bear ill-will to, to deſire or deſign the harm, to repine at the happy ſucceſs, or delight in the misfortunes of any: for as it is very hard to maintain peace and amicable correſpondence with thoſe we do not truly love; ſo it is abſolutely impoſſible to do it long with thoſe we hate; this ſatanic paſſion (or diſpoſition of ſoul) always prompting the mind poſſeſſed therewith to the contrivance and execution of miſchief; whence he that hates his brother is ſaid to be a murderer, as having in him that bitter root, from whence, if power and occaſion conſpire, will probably ſpring that moſt extreme of outrages, and capital breach of peace. Love is the only ſure cement, that knits and combines men in friendly ſociety; and hatred, the certain fountain of that violence, which rends and diſſolves it. We cannot eaſily hurt or ſtrive with thoſe we love and wiſh well to: we cannot poſſibly long agree with thoſe we hate and malign. Peace without love can be eſteemed little more than politic diſſimulation; and peace with hatred is really nothing leſs than an artificial diſguiſe, or an inſidious covert of enmity.

1 Joh. iii. 15.

2. We are hence obliged to perform all kind offices of humanity, which the condition of any man can require, and may by us be performed without conſiderable inconvenience or detriment to ourſelves or others.

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others. When, for the preſervation or comfortable accommodation of life, they need our help or our advice, we are readily to afford them; when they are in want or diſtreſs, we are to miniſter to them what comfort and relief we can. We are (upon this very ſcore) to obey that injunction of St. Paul to the Galatians, *As we have opportunity, let us do good to all men.* For without this beneficence a man's carriage (though otherwiſe harmleſs and inoffenſive) appears rather a ſuſpicious ſtrangeneſs, than a peaceable demeanour, and naturally produces an enmity in thoſe that are concerned in it. For he to whom, being preſſed with neceſſity, requiſite aſſiſtance is denied, will infallibly be apt to think himſelf not only neglected and diſeſteemed, but affronted alſo and injured; (need, in the general conceit of men, and eſpecially of thoſe that feel it, begetteth a kind of title to ſome competent relief;) and conſequently will heinouſly reſent, and complain bitterly of ſuch ſuppoſed wrong, and, if ever he become able, repay it with advantage. And much more are we upon the ſame account not to perform ill offices toward any man; not to diſturb him in the enjoyment of his innocent pleaſure; nor to hinder him in the advancing his lawful profit, nor to interrupt him in the proſecution of his reaſonable deſigns; nor any wiſe to vex and grieve him needleſsly; and (above all) not to detain him in, nor to aggravate his affliction. For theſe are actual violations of peace, and impediments of good correſpondence among men. Farther,

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Gal. vi. 10.

3. In this duty of living peaceably is included an obligation to all kind of juſt and honeſt dealing with all men; punctually to obſerve contracts, impartially to decide controverſies, equally to diſtribute rewards, to injure no man either in his eſtate, by violent or fraudulent encroachments upon his juſt poſſeſſions, or in his reputation, by raiſing or diſperſing ſlanderous reports concerning him: for theſe courſes of all others are moſt deſtructive to peace, and upon

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SERM. XX. the pretence of them moſt quarrels that ever were have been commenced.

Juſtice in its own nature is, and by the common agreement of men hath been deſigned the guardian of peace and ſovereign remedy of contention. But not to inſiſt long upon ſuch obvious ſubjects,

4. It much conduceth to the preſervation of peace, and upholding amicable correſpondence in our dealings and tranſactions with men, liable to doubt and debate, not to inſiſt upon nice and rigorous points of right, not to take all advantage offered us, not to deal hard meaſure, not to uſe extremities, to the damage or hindrance of others, eſpecially when no comparable benefit will thence accrue to ourſelves. For ſuch proceedings, as they diſcover in us little kindneſs to, or tenderneſs of our neighbours good, ſo they exceedingly exaſperate them, and perſuade them we are their enemies, and render them ours, and ſo utterly deſtroy peace between us. Whenas abating ſomething from the height and ſtrictneſs of our pretences, and a favourable receſſion in ſuch caſes will greatly engage men to have an honourable opinion, and a peaceable affection toward us.

Vide Tit. iii. 2. ἀμάχους εἶναι, ἐπιεικεῖς.

5. If we would attain to this peaceable eſtate of life, we muſt uſe toward all men ſuch demonſtrations of reſpect and courteſy, which according to their degree and ſtation cuſtom doth entitle them to, or which upon the common ſcore of humanity they may be reaſonably deemed to expect from us; reſpective geſtures, civil ſalutations, free acceſs, affable demeanour, cheerful looks, and courteous diſcourſe. Theſe, as they betoken good-will in them that uſe them, ſo they beget, cheriſh, and increaſe it in thoſe, whom they refer to: and the neceſſary fruit of mutual good-will is peace. But the contrary carriages, contemptuous or diſregardful behaviour, difficulty of admiſſion to converſe, a tetrical or ſullen aſpect, rough and faſtidious language, as they diſcover a mind averſe from friendly commerce, ſo they beget a more

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a more potent disdain in others: men generally (especially those of generous and hearty temper) valuing their due respect beyond all other interests, and more contentedly brooking injury than neglect. Whence this skill and dexterity of deportment (though immediately, and in its own nature, of no great worth, and regulating actions of small importance, gestures, looks, and forms of speech,) yet because it is a nurse of peace, and greatly contributes to the delightfulness of society, hath been always much commended, and hath obtained a conspicuous place in the honourable rank of virtues, under the titles of courtesy, comity, and affability; and the opposites thereto, rudeness and rusticity, have been deservedly counted and called vices in morality.

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6. This precept directly prohibits the use of all reproachful, scornful, and provoking language; these being the immediate results of enmity, and actual breaches of peace. Whence St. Paul conjoins, Μηδένα βλασφημεῖν, and ἀμάχους εἶναι, *To speak evil of no man, to be no quarrellers,* (or fighters) *but gentle, shewing all meekness unto all men.* For war is managed (and that with more deadly animosity) with the tongue, as well as with the hand. *(There is that speaketh like the piercings of a sword,* saith Solomon; and *whose teeth are spears and arrows, and their tongue a sharp sword,* saith David.) Words are with more anguish felt than blows; their wounds are more incurable, and they leave a deeper scar[a]. Men usually dread more the loss of their honour than their lives, and take more grievously the ravishing of their credit than the depredation of their estate. Living peaceably therefore implies as much abstaining from opprobrious words as injurious actions; yea more; for reviling is not only a violation of peace, but a dishonourable waging of war; like shooting arrows dipt in poison, and discharging

Tit. iii. 2.

Prov. xii. 18. Psal. lvii. 4. lxiv. 3. Prov. xviii. 8.

[a] Πλαστὸν ἦ χρῆμα λοιδορία; ὡς θυμοδακὴς ἀληθῶς, καὶ ἀμύητον ψυχὴν μᾶλλον, ἢ σιδηρὸς χρῶτα. *Jul. 2. Orat.*

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SERM. XX. ſlugs againſt our neighbour's reputation; practices condemned by all as baſe and inhuman, and contrary to the laws of a noble warfare; being arguments, we affect rather our adverſary's utter ruin, than a gallant victory over him. There be fair ways of diſputing our cauſe, without contumelious reflections upon perſons; and the errors of men may be ſufficiently refuted without ſatirical virulency[b]. One good reaſon modeſtly propounded hath in it naturally more power and efficacy to convince him that is in a miſtake, or to confound him with ſhame that is guilty of a fault, than ten thouſand ſcoffs and ignominious taunts. When we are to expreſs thoſe deeds of nature (the performance of which is concealed, as containing in it ſomething of ſuppoſed turpitude,) we are wont to veil them in ſuch modeſt circumlocutions, that by the hearers without offence to their baſhfulneſs may ſufficiently be underſtood. So when it is needful or expedient to confute the opinions, or reprove the actions of men, if we either charitably deſign their amendment, or deſire to maintain peaceable correſpondence with them, it behoves that we do not by uſing the moſt broad and diſtaſteful language immoderately treſpaſs upon their modeſty and patience; that (to uſe Seneca's phraſe) we do *agere curam non tantum ſalutis, ſed et honeſtæ cicatricis.* De Clem. lib. i. c. 17. *Have a care not only to cure the wound, but to leave a comely ſcar,* and not to deform him, whom we endeavour to reform; for no ſore is the eaſilier cured for being roughly handled, and leaſt of all thoſe in manners and opinion. A ſoft hand, and a tender heart, and a gentle tongue, are moſt convenient qualities of a ſpiritual Chirurgeon. But farther to this purpoſe.

Vid. egregium Antonini locum, lib. xi. §. 18. 9. ἀδόκητος.

Prov. xv. 1.

[b] Ζῆλος γὰρ συγγνώμης ἀπειρηκέναι οὐ ζῆλος, ἀλλὰ θυμὸς μᾶλλόν ἐστιν, καὶ πονηρία φιλανθρωπίαν οὐκ ἔχουσα, βασκανία τις εἶναι δοκεῖ. *Chryſ.* tom. v. p. 32.

7. If

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7. If we desire to live peaceably with all men, we are to be equal in censuring men's actions, candid in interpreting their meanings, mild in reprehending, and sparing to relate their miscarriages, to derive their actions from the best principles, (from which in the judgment of charity they may be supposed to proceed; as from casual mistake rather than from wilful prejudice, from human infirmity rather than from malicious design,) to construe ambiguous expressions to the most favourable sense they may admit; not to condemn men's practices without distinct knowledge of the case, and examining the reasons, which possibly may absolve or excuse them: to extenuate their acknowledged faults by such circumstances as aptly serve that purpose, and not to exaggerate them by strained consequences, or uncertain conjectures: to rebuke them (if need be) so as they may perceive we sincerely pity their errors, and tender their good, and wish nothing more than their recovery, and do not design to upbraid, deride, or insult over them being fallen; and finally, not to recount their misdeeds over frequently, unseasonably, and with complacence.[9] He that thus demeaneth himself, manifestly sheweth himself to prize his neighbour's good-will, and to be desirous to continue in amity with him; and assuredly obliges him to be in the same manner affected toward him. But he that is rigidly severe and censorious in his judgments, blaming in them things indifferent, condemning actions allowable, detracting from qualities commendable, deducing men's doings from the worst causes, and imputing them to the worst ends, and representing them under the most odious appellations; that calls all impositions of superiors, which he dislikes, tyranny, and all manners of divine worship, that suit not to his fancy, superstition, and all pretences to conscience in those that dissent from him, hypocrisy, and all opinions different from his, heresy; that is suspicious of ill intention without sufficient ground, and prejudicates men's meanings

Prov. xvii. 9.

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before he well apprehends them, and captiously perverts sayings capable of good construction; that is curiously inquisitive into his neighbour's life, and gladly observes failings therein, and upon all occasions recites stories to his disgrace and disadvantage; that is immoderately bitter, fierce, and vehement in accusing and inveighing against others, painting such, as he assumes to impugn, with the blackest colours, in the most horrid shape and ugly dress, converting all matter of discourse (though never so unseasonably and impertinently) into declamation, and therein copiously expatiating: in fine, employing his utmost might of wit and eloquence and confidence in rendering them to others as hateful, as he signifies they are to himself; such men, what do they else but loudly proclaim that they despise their neighbour's goodwill, purposely provoke his anger, and defy his utmost enmity? For it is impossible such dealing should not by them, who are therein concerned, be accounted extremely unjust, and to proceed from desperate hatred.

That flies like a vulture to carrion only. *Plut. de Util. cap. ex Inim.* Prov. xvii. 9. xxiv. 17.

8. He that would effectually observe this apostolic rule, must be disposed to overlook such lesser faults committed against him, as make no great breach upon his interest or credit, yea to forget or forgive the greatest and most grievous injuries; to excuse the mistakes, and connive at the neglects, and bear patiently the hasty passions of his neighbour, and to embrace readily any seasonable overture, and accept any tolerable conditions of reconcilement [c]. For even in common life that observation of our Saviour most exactly holds, *It is impossible that offences should not come*; the air may sooner be-

[c] *Sen. Ben.* vii. 31. Vincit malos pertinax bonitas. Νίκα ἐν τῷ ἀγαθῷ τὸ κακόν. Rom. xii. 21.

Iracitur aliquis? tu contra beneficiis provoca: cadit statim simultas ab altera parte deserta; nisi par non pugnat: si utrinque certabitur, ille est melior, qui prior pedem retulit; victus est qui vicit. *Sen. de Ira*, ii. 34.

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come wholly fixed, and the ſea continue in a perfect reſt, without waves or undulations, than human converſation be altogether free from occaſions of diſtaſte, which he that cannot either prudently diſſemble, or patiently digeſt, muſt renounce all hopes of living peaceably here. He that like tinder is inflammable by the leaſt ſpark, and is enraged by every angry word, and reſents deeply every petty affront, and cannot endure the memory of a paſt unkindneſs ſhould upon any terms be defaced, reſolves ſurely to live in eternal tumult and combuſtion, to multiply daily upon himſelf freſh quarrels, and to perpetuate all enmity already begun. Whenas by total paſſing by thoſe little cauſes of diſguſt, the preſent contention is altogether avoided, or inſtantly appeaſed, our neighbour's paſſion ſuddenly evaporates and conſumes itſelf; no remarkable footſteps of diſſenſion remain; our neighbour reflecting upon what is paſt, ſees himſelf obliged by our diſcreet forbearance, however all poſſible means are uſed to prevent trouble and preſerve peace. To this purpoſe, *The diſcretion of a man deferreth his anger, and it is his glory to paſs over a tranſgreſſion*, ſaith Solomon: and, *He that covereth a tranſgreſſion ſeeketh love*, ſaith the ſame wiſe prince But farther,

Prov. xix. 11.

Prov. xvii. 9.

9. If we would live peaceably with all men, we muſt not over highly value ourſelves, nor over eagerly purſue our own things. We muſt not admire our own endowments, nor inſiſt upon our deſerts; for this will make us apt to depreciate others, and them to loath us. We muſt not be over tender of our credit, and covetous of reſpect; for this will render us apt to take exceptions, and engage us in troubleſome competitions for ſuperiority of place, and pre-eminence in the vain opinions of men. *He that is of a proud heart ſtirreth up ſtrife*: And, *Only* (*i. e.* chiefly) *from pride cometh contention*, ſaith Solomon. We muſt not be much addicted to our own intereſts, for this will diſpoſe us to encroach upon the concernments of others,

Prov. xxviii. 25.

Prov. xiii. 10.

and

SERM. XX. and them to resist our attempts, whence conflict and enmity will necessarily arise. We must not prefer our own judgments, and imperiously obtrude them upon others; nor be pertinacious in persuading them to embrace our private opinions, nor violently urgent to a compliance with our humour. For these things are intolerably fastidious in conversation, and obnoxious to be charged with usurpation and iniquity; all men naturally challenging to themselves an equal, or at least a proportionable share of reason, together with the free conduct of their lives uncontrollable by private dictates. If therefore we desire to live quietly, and not needlessly to disoblige or displease others, we should be modest in esteeming our own abilities, and moderate in pursuing our own advantages, and in our converse not less complacent to others than we desire they should be to us; and as liberal in allowing leave to dissent from us, as we are bold in taking freedom to abound in our own sense. And if in debate a modest declaration of our opinion, and the reasons inducing us thereto, will not prevail, it behoves us to give over such a successless combat, and to retire into the silent enjoyment of our own thoughts. From not observing which rule, discourse grows into contention, and contention improves into feud and enmity.

10. If we would live peaceably, it concerns us to abstain from needless contests about matters of opinion, and questions either merely vain and frivolous, of little use or concernment, or over nice and subtile, and thence indeterminable by reason; or that are agitated with extraordinary eagerness and heat of passion, or such as are already defined by general consent, or such upon the decision of which the public peace and safety do depend. There are some controversies prickly like brambles, and apt to scratch those that handle them, but yielding no savoury or wholesome fruit: such as concern the consequences of imaginary suppositions, the state and circumstances of beings to us unknown, the right application of artificial

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artificial terms, and the like impertinent matters, which ſerve to no other purpoſe but the exerciſe of curious wits, and exciting emulation among them. SERM. XX.

Others there be concerning matters of more weighty moment, yet having the reſolution depending upon ſecrets unſearchable, or the interpretation of ambiguous words and obſcure phraſes, or upon ſome other uncertain conjectures, and are yet rendered more difficult by being entangled with inextricable folds of ſubtilty, nice diſtinctions, and crafty evaſions, deviſed by the parties engaged in them for the maintenance of their cauſes reſpectively; whence it hath happened, though with immenſe care and diligence of both parts they have been long canvaſſed, that yet they do, and in all probability will for ever remain undecided. So that now to engage in conteſt about them, may be reaſonably deemed nothing more than a wilful miſpenſe of our time, labour, and good humour, by vainly reciprocating the ſaw of endleſs contention. Other queſtions there be in themſelves of more eaſy reſolution, and of conſiderable importance, which yet by extreme oppoſition of parties are ſo clouded and overgrown with inſuperable prejudices, that the diſputing them is ſeldom attended with other ſucceſs, than an inflaming ourſelves and others with paſſion. Others are by ſmall and obſcure parties managed againſt the common conſent, and againſt the poſitive decrees of the moſt venerable authorities among men, by ventilating which as truth is like to gain little, ſo peace is ſure to ſuffer much. For as it is nowiſe a ſafe or adviſed courſe (except in caſe of neceſſary defence) to ſubject received opinions to the hazardous trial of a tumultuary conflict, their credit being better upheld by a ſtately reſervedneſs, than by a popular forwardneſs of diſcourſe; as buildings ſtand faſteſt that are never ſhaken, and thoſe poſſeſſions remain moſt ſecure that are never called in queſtion; ſo on the other hand, to countenance new and uncouth paradoxes,

Non ampliùs inveniri licet quam quod a Deo diſcitur. *Tertull. de Anim.* cap. 2.

as

SERM. XX. as it argues too much arrogance and presumption in confronting our single apprehensions against the deliberate sense and suffrage of so many men, yea so many ages of men; and is likely to prove a successless attempt, like swimming against the current, accompanied with much toil and little progress, so it serves no good end, but only foments divisions, and disturbs both our private and the public peace. But most of all we are to be cautelous of meddling with controversies of dangerous consequence, wherein the public weal and quiet are concerned, which bare the roots of sacred authority, and prostitute the mysteries of government to vulgar inspection. Such points ought to be subjects of law, not of syllogism, and the errors in them to be corrected by punishment, rather than confuted by argument: neither can it be thought reasonable that the interest of public peace should depend upon the event of private disputation [d]. It concerns us therefore, if we would live peaceably in such disputable matters, reserving all due reverence to the judgments of the most, the best and wisest persons, to be content in a modest privacy, to enjoy the results of a serious and impartial disquisition, patiently enduring others to dissent from us, and not attempting, by needless, fruitless, and endless contentions, to gain others to our persuasions; especially since the truth contended for may not be worth the passion employed upon it, and the benefits of the victory not countervail the prejudices sustained in the combat. For goodness and virtue may often consist with ignorance and error, seldom with strife and discord. And this consideration I shall conclude with these exhortations of St. Paul; *But foolish* Tit. iii. 9. *questions, and genealogies, and contentions, and law-contests decline, for they are unprofitable and vain.* And in 2 Ep.

[d] Οἱ μὲ γδ ἀπορῆσιες πότερον δεῖ τὰς θεὰς τιμᾶν, καὶ τὰς γονεῖς ἀγαπᾶν, ἢ ὔ, κολάσεως δέονται· οἱ δ᾽ πότερον ἡ χιὼν λευκὴ, ἢ ὔ, αἰσθήσεως. *Arist. Top.* i. 8.

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to Tim. ii. 23—25. *But fooliſh and unlearned queſtions avoid, knowing that they gender ſtrifes; and the ſervant of the Lord* (that is, a miniſter of religion) *muſt not ſtrive, but be gentle to all men, apt to teach, patient, in meekneſs inſtructing thoſe that are * contrarily diſpoſed.* And in the ſame chapter, ver. 14. *Of theſe things put them in remembrance, charging them before the Lord, that they ſtrive not about words to no profit, to the ſubverting of the hearers:* of ſo pernicious conſequence did St. Paul eſteem unneceſſary wrangling and diſputing to be. But farther,

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* Τοὺς ἀντιδιατιθεμένους.

11. If we deſire to live peaceably, we muſt reſtrain our pragmatical curioſity within the bounds of our proper buſineſs and concernment, not [being *curioſi in aliena republ.*] invading other men's provinces, and without leave or commiſſion intermeddling with their affairs[c]; not ruſhing into their cloſets, prying into their concealed deſigns, or dictating counſel to them without due invitation thereto; not controlling their actions, nor ſubjecting their proceedings to our cenſure, without competent authority. For theſe courſes men uſually look upon as raſh intruſions, both injurious and reproachful to them, uſurping upon that freedom of choice, which all men paſſionately affect to preſerve entire to themſelves, and arguing them of weakneſs and incapacity to manage their own buſineſs: neither do men more naturally drive away flies that buz about their ears, and moleſt them in their employments, than they with diſdain repel ſuch immodeſt and unſeaſonable meddlers in their affairs. Let no man ſuffer, ſaith St. Peter, *as a buſy-body in other men's matters:* intimating, that thoſe who are impertinently inquiſitive into other men's matters, make themſelves liable to ſuffer (and that deſervedly) for their fond curioſity

1 Pet. iv. 15.

* According to St. Paul's advice, 1 Theſſ. iv. 11. *Strive* (or be ambitious) *to be quiet, and to mind your own buſineſs.* (Φιλοτιμεῖσθαι ἡσυχάζειν, καὶ πράσσειν τὰ ἴδια.)

and

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SERM. XX. and bold presumption. And, *He that passeth by, and meddleth with strife belonging not to him, is like one that taketh a dog by the ears*, saith Solomon; that is, he catcheth at that which he cannot hold, and vainly aims at that which he cannot effect, and rashly irritates those which will turn upon him and bite him. If therefore we would neither molest others, nor be disquieted ourselves, we must be like natural agents, never working aught beyond our proper sphere of activity. But especially, if we desire to live peaceably, we must beware of assuming to ourselves a liberty to censure the designs, decrees, or transactions of public authority, and of saying to our superiors, What doest thou? and much more, by querulous murmurings, or clamorous declamations, of bringing envy and odium upon them. Few private men are capable of judging aright concerning those things, as being placed beneath in a valley, and wanting a due prospect upon the ground and causes of their proceedings, who by reason of their eminent station can see more and farther than they; and therefore are incompetent judges, and unjustly presume to interpose their sentence in such cases. But suppose the actions of superiors notoriously blameable and scandalous, and that by infallible arguments we are persuaded thereof; yet seeing neither the taxing of, nor complaint against them doth in any wise regularly belong to us, nor the discovery of our mind therein can probably be an efficacious means of procuring redress, and immediately tends to diminish the reputation and weaken the affection due to government, and consequently to impair the peaceable estate of things, which by them is sustained, we are wholly to abstain from such unwarrantable, unprofitable, and turbulent practices; and with a submiss and discreet silence, passing over the miscarriages of our superiors, to wait patiently upon the providence, and implore the assistance of him, who is the only competent Judge of such, and sovereign disposer of all things, who

Prov. xxvi. 17.

Prov. xxi. 1.

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who hath their hearts in his hands, and faſhioneth them as he thinks good. Farther,

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12. If we would live peaceably with all men, it behoves us not to engage ourſelves ſo deeply in any ſingular friendſhip, or in devotion to any one party of men, as to be entirely partial to their intereſts, and prejudiced in their behalf, without diſtinct conſideration of the truth and equity of their pretences in the particular matters of difference; not to approve, favour, or applaud that which is bad in ſome; to diſlike, diſcountenance, or diſparage that which is good in others: not, out of exceſſive kindneſs to ſome, to give juſt cauſe of diſtaſte to others: not, for the ſake of a fortuitous agreement in diſpoſition, opinion, intereſt, or relation, to violate the duties of juſtice or humanity. For he that upon ſuch terms is a friend to any one man, or party of men, as to be reſolved, with an implicit faith, or blind obedience, to maintain whatever he or they ſhall affirm to be true, and whatever they ſhall do to be good, doth in a manner undertake enmity againſt all men beſide, and, as it may happen, doth oblige himſelf to contradict plain truth, to deviate from the rules of virtue, and to offend Almighty God himſelf. This unlimited partiality we owe only to truth and goodneſs, and to God, (the fountain of them) in no caſe to ſwerve from their dictates and preſcriptions. He that followed Tiberius Gracchus in his ſeditious practices, upon the bare account of friendſhip, and alleged in his excuſe, that, if his friend had required it of him, he ſhould as readily have put fire to the capitol, was much more abominable for his diſloyalty to his country, and horrible impiety againſt God, than commendable for his conſtant fidelity to his friend. And that ſoldier which is ſaid to have told Cæſar, (in his firſt expedition againſt Rome) that in obedience to his commands he would not refuſe to ſheath his ſword in the breaſt of his brother, or in the throat of his aged father, or in the bowels of his preg-

Cic. in Lælio.

Luc. lib. i.

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pregnant mother, was for his unnatural barbarity rather to be abhorred, than to be esteemed for his loyal affection to his General. And in like manner, he that, to please or gratify the humour of his friend, can be either injurious, or treacherous, or notably discourteous to any man else, is very blameable, and renders himself deservedly odious to all others. Lælius, who incomparably well both understood and practised the rules of friendship, is by Cicero reported to have made this the first and chief law thereof. *Ut neque rogemus res turpes, nec faciamus rogati; That we neither require of our friends the performance of base and naughty things; nor, being requested of them, perform such ourselves.* And in the heraldry, or comparison of duties, as all others must give place to those of piety, verity, and virtue, so after them the duties of humanity justly challenge the next place of respect, even above those which belong to the highest degree of friendship (due to our nearest relations, yea to our country itself,) precisely taken, abstracted and distinguished from those of humanity. For the world is in nature the first, the most comprehensive and dearest country of us all; and our general obligations to mankind are more ancient, more fundamental, and more indispensable, than those particular ones superadded to, or superstructed on them. The peace therefore of the world, and the general welfare of men its citizens, ought to be more dear to us, and the means conducing thereto more carefully regarded by us in our actions, than either the love, favour, or satisfaction of any particular persons is to be valued or pursued. And the not observing this rule may reasonably be esteemed to have a great influence upon the continuance of those implacable feuds and dissensions, wherewith the world is so miserably torn and shattered. Men's being peremptorily resolved to extol, countenance, or excuse promiscuously all the principles and proceedings of the party to which they have addicted themselves,

Prov. xxiv. 24. He that saith to the wicked, Thou art righteous, him shall the people curse, nations shall abhor him. Cic. in Lælio.

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ſelves, and to ſee no error, fault, or abuſe in them; but by all means to depreſs, vilify, and condemn (if not to reproach, calumniate, and perſecute,) the opinions and practices of others, and not to acknowledge in them any thing conſiderably good or commendable; whence commonly all apprehend their adverſaries extremely unjuſt and diſingenuous towards them, and are alienated from all thoughts (or however diſcouraged from all hopes) of friendly accommodation and reconcilement. But he, that would live peaceably with all men, muſt be free in his judgment, impartial in his dealing, and ingenuous in his carriage toward all: not θαυμάζων πρόσωπα, admiring or wondering at ſome men, (as if they were impeccable, or infallible,) nor having the truth in reſpect of perſons, abetting in his friends only what is juſt and true, and allowing the ſame in others, but in neither by ſignal approbation countenancing any thing falſe or evil; for ſo demeaning himſelf, he giveth no man juſt occaſion of diſpleaſure or enmity againſt him.

Jud. 16.

Jam. ii. 1.

13. If we would live peaceably ourſelves, we ſhould endeavour to preſerve peace, and prevent differences, and reconcile diſſenſions among others, by doing good offices, and making fair repreſentations of intercurrent paſſages between them; by concealing cauſes of future diſguſt, and removing preſent miſunderſtandings, and excuſing paſt miſtakes; by allaying their paſſions, and rightly informing their minds, by friendly interceſſions, and pacific advices. For the fire that devoureth our neighbour's houſe threateneth and endangereth ours; and it is hard to approach contention, without being engaged therein. 'Tis not eaſy to keep ourſelves indifferent or neutral; and doing ſo we ſhall in likelihood be maligned and perſecuted by both the contending parties. *Bleſſed are the peace-makers*, ſaith our Saviour, *for they ſhall be called the ſons of God*; that is, they ſhall be highly eſteemed and reverenced

Matt. v. 9.

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for this divine quality, wherein they ſo nearly reſemble the God of peace, and his bleſſed Son the great Mediator. But farther, without reſpect to other recompence, and from the nature of their employment, ſuch are immediately happy, and in this their virtuous practice rewards itſelf, that by appeaſing others' quarrels, they ſave themſelves from trouble, and enjoy themſelves that tranquillity which they procure to others. But thoſe informing ſycophants, thoſe internuncios of peſtilent tales, and incendiaries of diſcord, that (from bad nature, or upon baſe deſign) by the ſtill breath of clandeſtine whiſpers, or by the more violent blaſts of impudent calumnies, kindle the flames of diſſenſion, or foment them among others; that, by diſſeminating infamous rumours, and by malicious ſuggeſtions, inſtil jealouſies into, and nouriſh malevolent ſurmiſes in the minds of men, *ſeparating*, as it is in the Proverbs, *between chief friends*, and widening the diſtance between others: theſe, I ſay, from the ſeeds of variance they ſcatter among others, reap in the end miſchief and diſturbance to themſelves; nor can expect to enjoy the benefit of that quiet, which they labour to deprive others of. *The beginning of ſtrife*, ſaith Solomon, *is as when one letteth out water*; and he that, to the intent his neighbour's lands ſhould be overflown with a torrent of diſſenſion, doth unlooſe the dams, and cut the banks of former friendſhip, may (if he be wiſe) expect the mercileſs flood ſhould at length reach himſelf, and that his own habitation ſhould be at laſt ſurrounded therewith. For when men at length begin to be weary, and to repent of their needleſs quarrels, and the miſchievous conſequences attending them, and to be inquiſitive into the cauſes and inſtruments of their vexation, they will certainly find out, deteſt, and invert the edge of their diſpleaſure upon theſe wretched makebates; and ſo the poiſon they mingled for others they themſelves drink up; the cataſtrophe of the tragedy (begun

To the counſellors of peace is joy. Prov. xii. 20.

Prov. xvi. 28.

Prov. xvii. 14.

Prov. xxv. 8.

Vid. Prov. xi. 27. He that diligently ſeeketh good procureth favour; but he that ſeeketh miſchief, it ſhall come upon him.

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gun by them) is acted upon themselves; they sink down into the pit they made for others, and in the net which they hid is their own foot taken: *Et delator habet quod dedit exitium.* SERM. XX.

Lastly, if we would effectually observe this precept, we must readily comply with the innocent customs, and obey the established laws of the places where we live. I say first comply with the customs; which also are in effect inferior laws enacted by the tacit agreement of the generality of men; the non-observation of which is upon many accounts very prejudicial to peaceable life. For to those concerned in it, it will always seem to intimate a squeamish niceness, a froward perverseness, an arrogant self-conceitedness, a manifest despising other men's judgments, and a virtual condemning their practices of fault or folly, and consequently a monopolizing all goodness, and appropriating all wisdom to himself; qualities intolerably odious to men, and productive of enmity. It incenses the people (hugely susceptive of provocation) with a sense of notable injury done, and contempt cast upon it. For the only authority, which the commonalty can lay claim to, consists in prescribing rules of decency in language, habit, gesture, ceremony, and other circumstances of action, declared and ratified by ordinary practice; non-conformity to which is by them adjudged a marvellous irregularity, contumacy, and rebellion against the majesty of the people, and is infallibly revenged and punished by them.

There is no preserving peace, nor preventing broils and stirs, but by punctually observing that ordinary rule of equity, that in cases of doubtful debate, and points of controverted practice, the fewest should yield to the most, the weakest bend to the strongest, and that to the greatest number should be allowed at least the greatest appearance of reason. To which purpose we may observe, that the best and wisest men (not to displease those with whom they con-

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verſed, as far as their duty to God, and their conſcience would permit) have commonly in their manners of life followed not what in their retired judgment they moſt approved, but what ſuited to the cuſtoms of their times and places, avoiding a moroſe ſingularity, as offenſive to others, and productive of diſquiet to themſelves [f]. You know how Cicero cenſured Cato for endeavouring, againſt the grain and predominant genius of thoſe times, to reduce things to a ſtrict agreement with his private notions: *Ille optimo animo utens, et ſumma fide, nocet interdum reipublicæ. Dicit enim tanquam in Platonis πολιτείᾳ, non tanquam in Romuli fæce ſententiam.* But a more clear and pertinent inſtance we have in St. Paul, who thus repreſents his own practice: *I have made myſelf a ſervant to all: Unto the Jews I became as a Jew; to them that are without law, as without law: To the weak became I as weak: I am made all things to all men, that I might by all means ſave ſome.* St. Paul wiſely knew, that, by a prudent compliance with men's cuſtoms, and condeſcenſion to their capacities, he engaged to him, or at leaſt did not alienate from him, their affections; and thereby became more capable of infuſing good doctrine into their minds, and promoting their ſpiritual good. And the ſame courſe was generally taken by the primitive Chriſtians, who in all things (not inconſiſtent with the rules and principles of their religion) did induſtriouſly conform their converſation to the uſual practices of men; thereby ſhunning thoſe ſcandalous imputations of pride and perverſeneſs, which then rendered the Jews ſo odious to the world, as appears by divers paſſages in the ancient apologiſts for Chriſtian religion: particularly Juſtin Martyr (in his Epiſtle

Epiſt. ad Att. lib. ii. Ep. 1.

1 Cor. ix. 20, 21, 22. v. 33.

Vid. Acts xxi.

[f] Id agamus, ut meliorem vitam ſequamur quam vulgus, non ut contrariam; alioqui quos emendari volumus fugamus et a nobis avertimus.

Temperetur vita inter bonos mores et publicos, &c. *Sen. Ep.* 5.

to

to Diognetus) hath theſe words: Χριϛιανοὶ γὰρ ὅτε γῆ, ὅτε φωνῇ, ὅτε ἔθεσι διακεκριμένοι τῶν λοιπῶν εἰσιν ἀνθρώπων· ὅτε γάρ πω πόλεις ἰδίας καϛοικοῦσιν, ὅτε διαλέκτῳ τινὶ παρηλλαγμένῃ χρῶνται, ὅτε βίον παράσημον ἀσκοῦσιν—καϛοικοῦντες δὲ πόλεις Ἑλληνικάς τε καὶ βαρβάρους, ὡς ἑκάϛῳ ἐκληρώθη, ἐν τοῖς ἐγχωρίοις ἔθεσιν ἀκολουθοῦντες, &c. *The Chriſtians neither in dwelling, language, or cuſtoms differ from the reſt of men; they neither inhabit towns proper to themſelves, nor uſe any peculiar dialect, nor exerciſe an uncouth manner of living; but, as by chance it is allotted to them, inhabiting cities belonging both to Greeks and Barbarians, comply with the cuſtoms of the country.* And much more hath he there; and much Tertullian likewiſe in his Apologetic, to the ſame purpoſe. Neither do we find in the life of our Saviour, that exact pattern of wiſdom and goodneſs, that in any thing he did affect to differ from the received cuſtoms of his time and country, except ſuch as were grounded upon vain conceits, extremely prejudicial to piety, or directly repugnant thereto.

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And I cannot except from this rule the compliance with religious cuſtoms uſed in the worſhip and ſervice of God: ſince a wilful diſcrepancy from them doth much more deſtroy peace, and kindle the flame of contention, in as much as men are apt to apprehend themſelves much more ſlighted and more condemned by a diſagreement in thoſe, than in matters of leſſer concernment. And it cannot reaſonably be imagined, that the God of love and peace, who queſtionleſs delights to ſee men converſe in peace and amity, and who therefore in general terms enjoins us to purſue the things that make for peace, (whereof certainly in reaſon and to experience, following indifferent and harmleſs cuſtoms, not expreſsly repugnant to his law, nor to the dictates of natural reaſon, is one thing, and not the leaſt,) in our addreſſes to himſelf (partly deſigned and mainly ſerving more ſtrictly to unite, not to diſſociate men in affection) ſhould diſlike or diſapprove the uſe of

Rom. xiv. 19.

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SERM. XX. this courſe ſo expedient and conducible to peace: eſpecially ſince he infinitely more regards the ſubſtance of the duty, and the devotion of the heart therein, than the manner, or any circumſtantial appendages thereof: 'tis certain however, that St. Paul intimates a wilful departure from ordinary practice in ſuch caſes, to proceed from a contentious diſpoſition: *But if any man*, ſaith he, *have a mind to be contentious*, (ſo δοκεῖ φιλόνεικος εἶναι imports,) *we have no ſuch cuſtom, nor the churches of God.*

1 Cor. xi. 16.

But yet much more is peaceable converſation impeached by diſobedience to eſtabliſhed laws, thoſe great bulwarks of ſociety, fences of order, and ſupports of peace; which he that refuſes to obey, is ſo far from living peaceably with all men, that he may reaſonably be preſumed unwilling to have peace with any man; ſince in a manner he defies all mankind, vilifies its moſt ſolemn judgments, endeavours to diſſolve thoſe ſacred bands by which its union is contained, and to ſubvert the only foundations of public tranquillity. He declares himſelf either to affect an univerſal tyranny over, or an abhorrency from ſociety with, other men, to be unwilling to live with them upon equal terms, or to ſubmit to any fair arbitration, to deſire that ſtrifes ſhould be endleſs, and controverſies never decided, who declines the verdict of law, the moſt ſolemn iſſue of deliberate advice, proceeding from the moſt honourable, moſt wiſe, moſt worthy and ſelect perſons, and involving in it the conſent of the whole commonwealth. St. Paul, directing that prayers ſhould be made for princes and thoſe in authority, aſſigns the reaſon, *that we may lead a quiet and peaceable life, in all godlineſs and honeſty:* and certainly if we are to pray for, we are alſo obliged to obey them in order to the ſame end, which to do is abſolutely in our power, and more immediately requiſite to that purpoſe. For as no peace can be preſerved without the influence of authority; ſo no authority can ſubſiſt without obedi-

1 Tim. ii. 2.

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ence to its ſanctions. He that is deſirous to enjoy the privileges of this happy eſtate of peace, muſt in reaſon be content to perform the duties enjoined, and bear the common burthens impoſed by thoſe who are the protectors of it. SERM. XX.

Thus, as plainly as I could, have I deſcribed what it is to live peaceably, and what the means are that principally conduce thereto: I ſhould now proceed to conſider the object of the duty, and the reaſons why it reſpects all men; as alſo whence it comes, that ſometimes we may fail in our endeavour of attaining this deſirable condition: and laſtly, to propound ſome inducements perſuaſive of its practice. But I muſt not farther encroach on your patience, and ſhall therefore reſerve theſe things to the next opportunity.

Now, the peace of God, which paſſeth all underſtanding, keep your hearts and minds in the knowledge and love of God, and of his Son Jeſus Chriſt our Lord; and the bleſſing of God Almighty, the Father, Son, and Holy Ghoſt, be among you, and remain with you always. Amen.

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SERMON XXI.

Of a peaceable Temper and Carriage.

ROM. xii. 18.

If it be poſſible, as much as lieth in you, live peaceably with all men.

I HAVE very lately conſidered what it is to *live peaceably*, and what are the duties included therein; and what means conduce thereto. SERM. XXI.

II. I proceed now to conſider the object thereof, and why the duty of living peaceably extends to *all men*, that is, why we are bound to bear good-will, and do good offices, and ſhew civil reſpects to all men; and to endeavour, that all men reciprocally be well-affected toward us. For it might with ſome colour of reaſon be objected, and ſaid, Why ſhould I be obliged heartily to love thoſe, that deſperately hate me; to treat them kindly, that uſe me deſpitefully; to help them, that would hinder me; to relieve them, that would plunge me into utter diſtreſs; to comfort them, that delight in my affliction; to be reſpective to, and tender of, their reputation, who deſpiſe, defame, and reproach me; to be indulgent and favourable to them, who are harſh and rigorous in their dealings with me; to ſpare and pardon them, who with implacable malice perſecute me? Why

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SERM. XXI. Why ſhould I ſeek their friendſhip, who diſdainfully reject mine; why prize their favour, who ſcorn mine? why ſtrive to pleaſe them, who purpoſely offend me? Or why ſhould I have any regard to men, void of all faith, goodneſs, or deſert? And moſt of all, why ſhould I be bound to maintain amicable correſpondence with thoſe, who are profeſſed enemies to piety and virtue, who oppugn truth, and diſturb peace, and countenance vice, error, and faction? How can any love, conſent of mind, or communion of good offices, intercede between perſons ſo contrarily diſpoſed? I anſwer, they may, and ought, and that becauſe the obligation to theſe ordinary performances is not grounded upon any peculiar reſpects, ſpecial qualifications, or ſingular actions of men, (which are contingent and variable) but upon the indefectible ſcore of common humanity. We owe them (as the philoſopher alleged, when he diſpenſed his alms to an unworthy perſon) ἐ τῷ ἀνθρώπῳ, ἀλλὰ τῷ ἀνθρωπίνῳ· not to the men, but to human nature reſident in them. There be indeed divers other ſorts of love, in nature and object more reſtrained, built upon narrower foundations, and requiring more extraordinary acts of duty and reſpect, (not competent to all men;) as a love of friendſhip, founded upon long acquaintance, ſuitableneſs of diſpoſition, and frequent exchanges of mutual kindneſs; a love of gratitude due to the reception of valuable benefits; a love of eſteem belonging to perſons endued with worth and virtue; a love of relation reſulting from kindred, affinity, neighbourhood, and other common engagements. But the love of benevolence, (which is precedent to theſe, and more deeply rooted in nature, more ancient, more unconfined, and more immutable) and the duties mentioned conſequent on it, are grounded upon the natural conſtitution, neceſſary properties, and unalterable condition of humanity, and are upon ſeveral accounts due thereto.

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1. Upon account of universal cognation, agreement, and similitude of nature. For οἰκεῖον ἅπας ἄνθρωπῳ ἀνθρώπῳ καὶ φίλον· *All men naturally are of kin and friends to each other*, saith Aristotle. *Et fratres etiam vestri sumus jure naturæ matris unius*; *We are also your brethren in the right of nature, our common mother*, said Tertullian of old, in the name of the Christians to the Heathens. We are but several streams issuing from one primitive source; several branches sprouting from the same stock; several stones hewed out of the same quarry: one substance, by miraculous efficacy of the divine benediction diffused and multiplied. One element affords us matter, and one fire actuates it, kindled at first by the breath of God. One blood flows in all our veins; one nourishment repairs our decayed bodies, and one common air refreshes our languishing spirits[a]. We are cohabitants of the same earth, and fellow-citizens of the same great commonwealth; *Unam remp. omnium agnoscimus mundum*, said the forementioned apologist for Christianity. We were all fashioned according to the same original idea, (resembling God our common father) all endowed with the same faculties, inclinations, and affections; all conspire in the essential and more notable ingredients of our constitution; and are only distinguished by some accidental, inconsiderable circumstances of age, place, colour, stature, fortune, and the like; in which we differ as much from ourselves in successions of time. So that what Aristotle said of a friend is applicable to every man: every man is ἄλλος αὐτὸς, *another*

8. Eth. cap. 1.

In Apolog.

Acts xvii. 26.

[a] Ἀνδράποδον ἐκ ἀντέχῃ τοῦ ἀδελφοῦ τοῦ σαυτοῦ ὃς ἔχει τὸν Δία πρόγονον· ὃς σπερ υἱὸς ἐκ τῶν αὐτῶν σπερμάτων γίγονε, καὶ τῆς αὐτῆς ἄνωθεν καλαβολῆς. &c. *Epict.* i. 13.

Nemo est in genere humano, cui non dilectio, etsi non pro mutua charitate, pro ipsa tamen communis naturæ societate debeatur. *Aug. Ep.* 121. *ad Probam.*

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SERM. XXI.

ourſelf[b]: and he that hates another, deteſts his own moſt lively picture; he that harms another, injures his own nature; he that denies relief to another, ſtarves a member of his own body, and withers a branch of his own tree. *The merciful man doeth good to his own ſoul; but he that is cruel troubleth his own fleſh.* Neither can any perſonal demerit of vicious habit, erroneous opinion, enormous practice, or ſignal diſcourteſy towards us, diſſolve theſe bands: for as no unkindneſs of a brother can wholly reſcind that relation, or diſoblige us from the duties annexed thereto; ſo neither upon the faults or injuries of any man can we ground a total diſpenſation from the offices of humanity, eſpecially if the injuries be not irreparable, nor the faults incurable.

Prov. xi. 17.

See Deut. xxv. 3.— Leſt thy brother ſeem vile unto thee.

2. We are indiſpenſably obliged to theſe duties, becauſe the beſt of our natural inclinations prompt us to the performance of them; eſpecially thoſe of pity and benignity, which are manifeſtly diſcernible in all, but moſt powerful and vigorous in the beſt natures; and which, queſtionleſs, by the moſt wiſe and good Author of our beings were implanted therein both as monitors to direct, and as ſpurs to incite us to the performance of our duty. For the ſame bowels, that in our want of neceſſary ſuſtenance, do by a lively ſenſe of pain inform us thereof, and inſtigate us to provide againſt it, do in like manner grievouſly reſent the diſtreſſes of another, and thereby admoniſh us of our duty, and provoke us to relieve them. Even the ſtories of calamities, that in ages long ſince paſt have happened to perſons no wiſe related to us, yea, the fabulous reports of tragical events, do (even againſt the bent of our wills, and all reſiſtance of reaſon) melt our hearts with compaſſion, and draw tears from our eyes;

[b] Nihil eſt enim unum uni tam ſimile, tam par, quam omnes inter noſmetipſos ſumus, &c. *Cic. de Legib.* i. p. 161.

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and thereby evidently signify that general sympathy which naturally intercedes between all men, since we can neither see, nor hear of, nor imagine another's grief, without being afflicted ourselves. Antipathies may be natural to wild beasts; but to rational creatures they are only unnatural. And on the other side, as nature to eating and drinking, and such acts requisite to the preservation of our life, hath adjoined a sensible pleasure and satisfaction, enticing us to, and encouraging us in the performance of them; so, and doubtless to the same end, hath she made relieving the necessities of others, and doing good offices to them, to be accompanied with a very contentful and delicious relish to the mind of the doer. Epicurus, that great master of pleasure, did himself confess, that to bestow benefits was not only more brave, but more pleasant, than to receive them; (Ἐπίκουρος, saith [c] Plutarch, τὸ εὖ πάσχειν, τὸ εὖ ποιεῖν, οὐ μόνον κάλλιον, ἀλλὰ καὶ ἥδιον εἶναι φησί.) And, certainly, no kind of actions a man can perform are attended with a more pure, more perfect, more savoury delight, than those of beneficence are. Since nature therefore hath made our neighbour's misery our pain, and his content our pleasure; since with indissoluble bands of mutual sympathy she hath concatenated our fortunes and affections together; since by the discipline of our sense she instructs us, and by the importunity thereof solicits us to the observance of our duty, let us follow her wise directions, and conspire with her kindly motions; let us not stifle or weaken by disuse, or contrary practice, but by conformable action cherish and confirm the good inclinations of nature.

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—hæc nostri pars optima sensus, —mutuus ut nos affectus petere auxilium, et præstare juberet. *Juven. Sat.* 15.

3. We are obliged to these duties upon account of common equity. We have all (the most sour and stoical of us all) implanted in us a natural ambition, and a desire (which we can by no means era-

[c] De Philos. convictu cum Princip. Εὐφραίνου τὸ εὐεργετεῖν. *M. Ant.*

dicate,

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SERM. XXI. dicate) of being beloved and reſpected by all; and are diſpoſed in our need to demand aſſiſtance, commiſeration of our misfortunes, and relief in our diſtreſs of all that are in capacity to afford them; and are apt to be vehemently diſpleaſed, to think ourſelves hardly dealt with, and to complain of cruelty and inhumanity in thoſe that refuſe them to us: and therefore in all reaſon and equity we ſhould readily pay the ſame love, reſpect, aid, and comfort to others, which we expect from others; for, *Beneficium qui dare neſcit, injuſte petit*; nothing is more unreaſonable, or unequal, than to require from others thoſe good turns, which upon like occaſion we are unwilling to render to others.

4. We are obliged to theſe duties of humanity upon account of common intereſt, benefit, and advantage. The welfare and ſafety, the honour and reputation, the pleaſure and quiet of our lives are concerned in our maintaining a loving correſpondence with all men. For ſo uncertain is our condition, ſo obnoxious are we to manifold neceſſities, that there is no man whoſe good-will we may not need, whoſe good word may not ſtand us in ſtead, whoſe helpful endeavour may not ſometimes oblige us. The great Pompey, the glorious triumpher over nations, and admired darling of fortune, was beholden at laſt to a ſlave for the compoſing his aſhes, and celebrating his funeral obſequies. The honour of the greateſt men depends on the eſtimation of the leaſt; and the good-will of the meaneſt peaſant is a brighter ornament to the fortune, a greater acceſſion to the grandeur of a prince, than the moſt radiant gem in his royal diadem. However the ſpite and enmity of one (and him the moſt weak otherwiſe and contemptible) perſon may happen to ſpoil the content of our whole life, and deprive us of the moſt comfortable enjoyments thereof; may divert our thoughts from our delightful employments to a ſolicitous care of ſelf-preſervation and

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and defence; may diſcompoſe our minds with vex- SERM.
atious paſſions; may by falſe reports, odious ſuggeſ- XXI.
tions, and ſlanderous defamations blaſt our credit, raiſe a ſtorm of general hatred, and conjure up thouſands of enemies againſt us; may by inſidious practices ſupplant and undermine us, prejudice our welfare, endanger our eſtate, and involve us in a bottomleſs gulf of trouble: it is but reaſonable therefore, if we deſire to live ſecurely, comfortably, and quietly, that by all honeſt means we ſhould endeavour to purchaſe the good-will of all men, and provoke no man's enmity needleſsly; ſince any man's love may be uſeful, and every man's hatred is dangerous.

5. We are obliged to theſe duties by a tacit compact and fundamental conſtitution of mankind, in purſuance of thoſe principal deſigns, for which men were incorporated, and are ſtill continued in civil ſociety. For to this purpoſe do men congregate, cohabit, and combine themſelves in ſociable communion, that thereby they may enjoy a delightful converſation, void of fear, free from ſuſpicion, and free from danger; promote mutual advantage and ſatisfaction; be helpful and beneficial each to other: abſtracting from which commodities the retirements of a cloiſter, or the ſolitudes of a deſert, the life of a recluſe, or of a wild beaſt, would perhaps be more deſirable than theſe of gregarious converſe: for as men, being pleaſed and well affected to each other, are the moſt obliging friends, and pleaſant companions; ſo being enraged, they are the moſt miſchievous and dangerous neighbours, the moſt fierce and ſavage enemies. By neglecting, therefore, or contravening theſe duties of humanity, we fruſtrate the main ends of ſociety, diſappoint the expectations of each other, ſubvert the grounds of ordinary civility, and in the commonwealth deal as unpoliticly, as the members in the body ſhould act unnaturally, in ſubtracting mutual aſſiſtance, or harming each other; as if the eye ſhould deny to the hands the direction of ſight, and

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SERM. XXI. and the hands in revenge ſhould pluck out the eyes.

6. We are by obſerving theſe rules to oblige and render men well-affected to us, becauſe being upon ſuch terms with men conduceth to our living (not only delightfully and quietly, but) honeſtly and religiouſly in this world. How peace and edification, ſpiritual comfort and temporal quiet do concur and co-operate, we ſee intimated Acts ix. 31. *Then had the churches peace throughout all Judæa, and Galilee, and Samaria, and were edified; and walking in the fear of the Lord, and in the comfort of the Holy Ghoſt, were multiplied.* St. Paul adviſed the Chriſtians of his time, liable to perſecution, *to make prayers for all men*, (and *eſpecially for thoſe in eminent power*) *that they might lead* [d] *a quiet and peaceable life in all godlineſs and honeſty*; to pray for them, that is, to pray that they might be ſo diſpoſed, as not to moleſt, interrupt, or diſcourage them in the exerciſe of virtue, and practice of piety. For theſe by a tranquillity of mind, a ſedateneſs of affections, a competency of reſt, and leiſure, and retirement, a freedom from amazing fear, diſtracting care, and painful ſenſe, are greatly advanced; of which advantages by contentious broils and enmities we are deprived and encumbered with the contrary impediments. They breed thorny anxieties, and by them choak the ſeeds of good intention: they raiſe duſky fumes of melancholy, by them intercepting the beams of ſpiritual light, and ſtifling the flames of devout affection. By them our thoughts are affixed upon the baſeſt, and taken off from the moſt excellent objects; our fancies are diſordered by turbulent animoſities; our time is ſpent, and our endeavour taken up in the moſt ungrateful and unprofitable employments, of defeating the attempts, reſiſting the aſſaults, diſprov-

1 Tim. ii. 1, 2.

[d] Ἥρεμον καὶ ἡσύχιον βίον, (a retired and quiet life.)

ing

ing the calumnies, countermining the plots of adverſaries; they bring us upon the ſtage againſt our will, and make us act parts in tragedies, neither becoming, nor delighting us. They diſturb often our natural reſt, and hinder us in the diſpatch of our ordinary buſineſs; and much more impede the ſteadineſs of our devotion, and obſtruct the courſe of religious practice. They tempt us alſo to omiſſions of our duty, to unſeemly behaviour, and to the commiſſions of grievous ſin; to harſh cenſure, envious detraction, unwarrantable revenge, repining at the good ſucceſſes, and delighting in the misfortunes of others. Many examples occur in hiſtory, like thoſe of Hanno the Carthaginian, and Quint. Metellus, (Pompey's antagoniſt) who, in purſuance of ſome private grudges, have not only betrayed their own intereſts, and ſullied their own reputations; but notably diſſerved, and damnified the public weal of their country: and ſo will our being engaged in enmity with men cauſe us to neglect, if not to contradict, our deareſt concernments; whence we ſhould carefully avoid the occaſions thereof, and by an innocent and beneficent converſation oblige men to a friendly correſpondence with us. SERM. XXI.

7. We are obliged to perform theſe duties of humanity, becauſe by ſo doing we become more capable of promoting goodneſs in others, and ſo of fulfilling the higheſt duties of Chriſtian charity; of ſucceſsfully adviſing and admoniſhing others; of inſtructing their ignorance, and convincing their miſtakes; of removing their prejudices, and ſatisfying their ſcruples; of reclaiming them from vice, error, faction; and reconciling them to virtue, truth, and peace. For by no force of reaſon, or ſtratagem of wit, are men ſo eaſily ſubdued, by no bait ſo thoroughly allured and caught, as by real courteſy, gentleneſs, and affability; as on the other ſide, by a ſour and peeviſh humour, ſupercilious looks, bitter language, and harſh dealing, men are rendered indocile and intractable,

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SERM. XXI. table, averſe from better inſtruction, obſtinate in their ways, and pertinacious in their conceits. Eaſily do men ſwallow the pill gilded with fair carriage, and ſweetened by kind ſpeech; readily do they afford a favourable ear to the advice ſeeming to proceed from good-will, and a tender care of their good: but the phyſic of wholeſome admonition being ſteeped in the vinegar of reproach, and tempered with the gall of paſſion, becomes diſtaſteful and loathſome to the patient: neither will men willingly liſten to the reaſonings of thoſe, whom they apprehend diſaffected to their perſons, and more deſirous to wound their reputations, than to cure their diſtempers. The ſlighteſt argument, the moſt ſimple and unpoliſhed oration, iſſuing from the mouth of a friend, is wonderfully more prevalent, than the ſtrongeſt demonſtration, than the moſt powerful eloquence of an enemy. For obliging uſage and courteous ſpeech unlock the affections, and by them inſinuate into the reaſon of men: but ſurly deportment and froward expreſſions dam up the attention with prejudice, and interclude all avenues to the underſtanding. An illuſtration of which diſcourſe we have from comparing the different practice of the Jews, and the ancient Chriſtians, with the contrary ſucceſſes thereof. The Jews, by their ſeditious and turbulent practices, by their inſolent contempt, and implacable hatred of others (for you know what Tacitus ſaith of them: *Apud ipſos fides obſtinata, miſericordia in promptu, ſed adverſus omnes alios hoſtile odium*;) by their perverſe and unſociable humours, declining all intercourſe, and refuſing ordinary offices of humanity (ſo much as to ſhew the way, or to direct the thirſty traveller to the fountain) to any not of their own ſect, did procure an odium, ſcorn, and infamy upon their religion, rendered all men averſe from enquiring into, or entertaining any good opinion thereof, and ſo very little enlarged its bounds, and gained few proſelytes thereto. But the Chriſtians, by

Hiſt. lib. v.

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by a mild, patient, and peaceable behaviour; by obedience to laws, and compliance with harmleſs cuſtoms; by perfect innocence, and abſtinence from doing injury; by paying due reſpects, and performing civil offices and demonſtrations of benevolence; by loving converſation, and friendly commerce with all, commended their doctrine to the regard of men[e]; and by this only piece of rhetoric (without terror of arms, or countenance of power, or plauſibility of diſcourſe, or promiſe of temporal reward) ſubdued the faith of men, and perſuaded a great part of the world to embrace their excellent profeſſion. SERM. XXI.

"We converſe with you like men, we uſe the "ſame diet, habit, and neceſſary furniture: we have "recourſe to your tribunals; we frequent your mar- "kets, your fairs, your ſhops, your ſtalls, your "ſhambles, your baths: we cohabit, we ſail, we war, "we till, we trade, we maintain all manner of com- "merce with you," ſaith the Chriſtian apologiſt to the Pagans, in behalf of the ancient Chriſtians. Which kind of practice they derived not only from the ſweet temper and noble genius of their religion, but from the expreſs inſtitution of the firſt teachers thereof, and from their exemplary practice therein. For both by doctrine did the Apoſtles exhort, and by their example incite them to adorn the Goſpel, and render the diſcipline of Chriſt amiable by their meek, gentle, compliant, and inoffenſive converſation; and thereby to allure others to a willing entertainment thereof. To this purpoſe are thoſe exhortations, Phil. iv. 5. *Let your moderation* (τὸ ἐπιεικὲς ὑμῶν, *your equity*, or *gentleneſs*) *be known to all men:* and, 1 Theſſ. v. 14.—*Comfort the* *afflicted, ſupport the weak, be long-ſuffering toward all. Be ye all careful* Tertul. Apol.

[e] Thus the ancient Chriſtians: but when religion declined, diſſenſion and ill-will did grow; ſo that the heathen hiſtorian (*Am. Mar.* lib. xxii.) could ſay of Julian: *Nullas inſtitis hominibus beſtias, ut ſunt ſibi ferales plerique Chriſtianorum, expertus.*

SERM. XXI.

ful not to render evil for evil, but always purſue goodneſs toward each other, and toward all: and, Gal. vi. 10. *As we have opportunity, let us do good to all men:* and, Tit. iii. 1, 2. *Put them in mind to be ſubject to principalities and powers, to be ready to every good work; to reproach no man; not to be contentious, but gentle, ſhewing all meekneſs to all men:* and, 2 Tim. ii. 24, 25. *The miniſter of the Lord muſt not ſtrive, but be gentle unto all men, apt to teach, patient: in meekneſs inſtructing thoſe that oppoſe themſelves:* (or thoſe that are otherwiſe diſpoſed, Τὰς ἀντιδιατιθεμένας) *if peradventure God will give them repentance to the acknowledgment of the truth:* where gentleneſs toward all, and meekneſs toward adverſaries, are oppoſitely conjoined, with aptneſs to teach and inſtruct; the one qualification ſo effectually prediſpoſing to the other: and it is beſide intimated, that gentle and meek treatment are ſuitable inſtruments ordinarily employed by God to convert men from error to truth.

8. We are bound hereto in compliance and conformity to the beſt patterns, God, Chriſt, the Apoſtles, the primitive Saints: this illuſtrious doctor of Chriſtian religion, St. Paul, did not fail to ſecond this his doctrine with his own example. For, *Give none offence,* ſaith he, *neither to the Jews nor to the Gentiles, nor to the Church of God; even as I pleaſe all men in all things, not ſeeking mine own profit, but the profit of many, that they may be ſaved: Pleaſe all men in all things:* what could St. Paul ſay, or what do more? And again, *For though,* ſaith he, *I be free from all men, yet have I made myſelf a ſervant unto all, that I might gain the more: to the weak became I as weak, that I might gain the weak: I am made all things to all men, that by all means I might ſave ſome.* See how far this charitable deſign of doing good to others tranſported him: he parted with his own freedom, that he might redeem them from the ſlavery of a wicked life; he denied his own preſent ſatisfaction, that he might procure them a laſting content; he deſpiſed

1 Cor. x. 32, 33.

1 Cor. ix. 19, &c.

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deſpiſed his own profit, that he might promote their ſpiritual advantage; he proſtituted his own reputation, that he might advance them to a condition of true glory. He underwent grievous afflictions for their comfort, ſuſtained reſtleſs pains for their eaſe, and hazarded his own ſafety for their ſalvation. He condeſcended to their infirmities, ſuited his demeanour to their tempers, complied with their various humours, and contrary cuſtoms: he differed from himſelf, that he might agree with them, and transformed himſelf into all ſhapes, that he might convert them into what they ſhould be, reform their manners, and tranſlate them into a happy eſtate. But above all is the practice of our Lord himſelf moſt remarkable to this purpoſe; and diſcovers plainly to him that obſerves an univerſally large and unreſtrained philanthropy. For having from a wonderful conſpiracy of kindneſs and good-will (between him and his eternal Father) toward the world of men, deſcended willingly from the throne of his celeſtial Majeſty, and enveloped his divine glory in a cloud of mortal frailty, and *that*, as the Apoſtle ſaith, *he might reconcile all things in heaven and earth*, conjoin God and man by a nearer alliance, and unite men together by the more ſacred bands of common relation to himſelf: having aſſumed not only the outward ſhape and corporeal reſemblance of man, but the inward frame, and real paſſions of human ſouls; he diſdained not accordingly to obey the laws, to follow the inclinations, to obſerve the duties of the beſt and moſt perfect humanity; with an equal and impartial bounty imparting free admittance, familiar converſe, friendly aid and ſuccour unto all, even the worſt of men in all appearance, (and that ſo far, that ſome rigorous cenſurers thence preſumed to tax him as *a glutton, and a good-fellow, a friend to publicans and ſinners*,) diſtributing liberally to all the incomparable benefits of his heavenly doctrine, of his holy example, of his miraculous power;

Coloſſ. i. 20.

a Matt. xi. 19.

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SERM. XXI. inſtructing the ignorances, detecting the errors, diſpoſſeſſing the devils; ſuſtaining the weakneſſes, overlooking the injuries, comforting the afflictions, ſupplying the neceſſities, healing the diſeaſes, and remedying all the miſeries of all, that did not wilfully reActs x. 38. ject their own welfare: *He went about*, ſaith St. Peter in the Acts, *doing good, and healing all that were oppreſſed of the devil:* and, *He went about all the cities* Matt. ix. 35. *and villages, teaching in their ſynagogues, and preaching the Goſpel of the kingdom, and healing every ſickneſs and every diſeaſe among the people*, ſaith St. Matthew's Goſpel. He deſpiſed not the meaneſt, either in outward eſtate, or ſpiritual improvement. He invited all unto him, repelled or diſcouraged none; nor refuſed to any that came unto him his counſel or his help. He was averſe from no man's ſociety (and if in any degree from any, chiefly from thoſe, who conLuke xviii. 9. fidently pretended to extraordinary ſanctity, and proudly contemned others.) Meek and gentle he was, mild and patient; courteous and benign; lowly and condeſcenſive; tender and compaſſionate in his converſation unto all. And for a complement of his tranſcendent charity, and for an enforcement unto ours, he laid down his life for us all, as a common price to purchaſe remiſſion of ſins: a general ranſom to redeem the human creation from the captivity of hell and ſlavery of corruption, into the glorious liberty of the ſons of God; demoliſhing by his pacific death all partition-walls, and laying open all incloſures of the divine favour; reconciling God to man, and combining man to himſelf by the freſh cement of his precious blood: ſo that now not only as fellow creatures; but (which is exceedingly more) as partakers of the ſame common redemption, as objects of the ſame mercy, as obliged in the ſame common debt, and as capable of the ſame eternal happineſs, by new and firmer engagements we are bound to all mutual kindneſs and benevolence toward all.
Rom. xiv. 15. For, *Deſtroy not*, ſaith St. Paul, and by like reaſon I may

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may ſay, harm not, vex not, be not unkind to) *him, for whom Chriſt died.* SERM. XXI.

Nay, farther, we have the example of Almighty God himſelf directing, and by our Saviour's expreſs admonition obliging us to this univerſal beneficence, compaſſion, and patience towards all: who by expreſs teſtimony of ſacred writ, and by palpable ſigns of continual experience, declareth himſelf to be a lover of mankind; to be good to all, and tenderly merciful over all his works; not to afflict willingly, nor grieve the children of men; to compaſſionate the miſeries, and ſupply the needs, and relieve the diſtreſſes; to deſire the ſalvation, and to delight in the happineſs of men: who with an indifferent, unlimited munificence diſpenſes his bleſſings, extends his watchful providence, and imparts his loving care unto all; cauſing his ſun with comfortable beams to ſhine, and the refreſhing ſhowers to deſcend, the earth to yield her pleaſant fruits, the temperate ſeaſons to recur, and all the elements to miniſter ſuccour, joy, and ſatisfaction even to the moſt impious and ungrateful toward him: who with immenſe clemency and long-ſufferance overlooks the ſacrilegious affronts offered daily to his majeſty, the outrageous violations of his laws, and the contemptuous neglects of his unexpreſſible goodneſs: who patiently waits for the repentance, and inceſſantly ſolicits the reconcilement, courts the amity, and in a manner begs the good-will of his moſt deadly enemies; whom he hath always in his hand, and can cruſh to nothing at his pleaſure. For, *We are embaſſadors for Chriſt, as if God by us did entreat you: We beſeech you in Chriſt's behalf; be reconciled to God*, ſaith St. Paul.

Tit. iii. 2. Pſal. cxlv. 9.

Vid. Clement. Epiſt. ad Cor. pag. 27.

Since therefore upon account of natural conſanguinity, of our beſt inclinations, of common equity, and general advantage, and an implicit compact between men; of ſecuring our, and promoting others virtue and piety; from the exhortations of Scripture mentioned, and many more tending to the ſame purpoſe,

SERM. XXI. pose, from the example of the ancient Christians, the leaders and champions of our religion, of the Apostles, the masters and patriarchs thereof, of our blessed Redeemer, and of Almighty God himself, we are obliged to this universal benevolence and beneficence toward all; no misapprehensions of judgment, no miscarriages in practice, no ill dispositions of soul, no demerits in himself, no discourtesies toward us, ought wholly to alienate our affections from, or to avert us from doing good, or to incline us to render evil for evil unto any person: especially considering, that the omissions of others cannot excuse us from the performance of our duty; that no man is to be presumed incorrigible, nor (like the lapsed Angels) concluded in desperate impenitence; and that our loving and gentle demeanor toward them may be instrumental to their amendment, and the contrary may contribute to their progress and continuance in offences; that God hath promised to us a reward of our patience, and hath reserved to them a season of judgment and punishment, if they persist obstinate in their disorderly courses; that to avenge their trespasses belongs not to us, but to Almighty God, who is more nearly concerned in, and more injured by them, and is yet content to endure them, to prolong their lives, to continue his benefits to them, and to expect their conversion: that our differing from them is not to be attributed to ourselves, but wholly, or chiefly, to the goodness of God; that we always were, are, and shall be liable to the same errors, vices, and misdemeanors: that, lastly, the faults and follies of others, like the maims of body, distempers of soul, or crosses of fortune, (being their own greatest unhappinesses) require rather our pity than our hatred, to be eased by our help, than aggravated by our unkindness. 'Tis too scant therefore and narrow a charity that is limited by correspondence of courtesy, or by the personal merits of others. We are bound to live peaceably with, that

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is, to be innocent, beneficial, reſpective to all, and to SERM. ſeek the reciprocal good-will, love, and amity of all. XXI. But I have inſiſted too long upon this particular, concerning the object of this duty, and its extenſion.

III. I proceed briefly to conſider whence it comes, that (as I before obſerved was intimated in theſe words, *If it be poſſible, as much as lieth in you,*) though we do our parts, and perform carefully the duties incumbent on us, though we bear good-will, and do good offices, and yield due reſpects, and abſtain from all not only injurious, but rigorous dealings toward all; though we revile none, nor cenſure harſhly, nor preſumptuouſly intermeddle with others' affairs; though we obey laws, and comply with received cuſtoms, and avoid all occaſions of contention; though our tempers be meek, our principles peaceable, and our converſations inoffenſive, we may yet prove ſucceſsleſs in our endeavours to live peaceably, and may be hated, harmed, and diſquieted in our courſe of life. That it ſo happens, we find by plain experience, and manifold example. For *Moſes, the meekeſt man upon earth*, and commended beſide by all circumſtances of divine favour, and human worth, was yet often envied, impugned, and moleſted by thoſe, whom by all manner of benefits he had moſt highly obliged. And we find David frequently complaining, Vid. Pſ. lv. that by thoſe, whoſe good will, by performing all of- 10. fices of friendly kindneſs and brotherly affection, he had ſtudiouſly laboured to deſerve, whoſe maladies and calamities he had not only tenderly commiſerated, but had prayed and humbled his ſoul with faſting for their recovery and deliverance from them, was yet recompenſed by their treacherous devices againſt his ſafety, by grievous reproaches, and ſcornful inſultings over him in his affliction; as we ſee at large in Pſalms xxxv. and lxix. And in Pſalm cxx. he thus lamentably bemoans his condition: *Wo is me, that I ſojourn in Meſech, that I dwell in the tents of Kedar: My ſoul hath long dwelt with him that hateth peace:*

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SERM. XXI. *peace: I am for peace; but when I ſpeak, they are for war.* And our bleſſed Saviour himſelf, though in the whole tenor of his life he demonſtrated an incomparable meekneſs and ſweetneſs of diſpoſition, and exerciſed continually all manner of kindneſs and beneficence toward all men, was notwithſtanding loaded with all kinds of injuries and contumelies, was bitterly hated, ignominiouſly diſgraced, and maliciouſly perſecuted unto death. And the ſame lot befel his faithful diſciples, that although their deſign was benign and charitable, their carriage blameleſs and obliging toward all, they were yet purſued conſtantly both by the outrageous clamours of the people, and cruel uſages from thoſe in eminent power. Now though it ſeem ſtrange and almoſt incredible, that they who are truly friends to all, and are ready to do to all what good they can; who willingly diſpleaſe none, but induſtriouſly ſtrive to acquire (not with glozing ſhews of popularity, but by real expreſſions of kindneſs) the good-will and favour of all, ſhould yet be maligned, or moleſted by any; yet ſeeing it ſo happens, if we enquire into the reaſon, we ſhall find this miracle in morality to proceed (to omit the neglect of the duties mentioned in our former diſcourſe) chiefly from the exceeding variety, difference, and contrariety of men's diſpoſitions, joined with the moroſity, aptneſs to miſtake, envy, or unreaſonable perverſeneſs of ſome; which neceſſarily render the means of attaining all men's good-will inſufficient, and the endeavours unſucceſsful. For men ſeeing by ſeveral lights, reliſhing with diverſely diſpoſed palates, and meaſuring things by different ſtandards, we can hardly do or ſay any thing, which, if approved and applauded by ſome, will not be diſliked and blamed by others; if it advance us in the opinion of ſome, will not as much depreſs us in the judgment of others; ſo that in this irreconcileable diverſity and inconſiſtency of men's apprehenſions, it is impoſſible not to diſpleaſe many; eſpecially ſince

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since some men either by their natural temper, or from the influence of some sour principles they have imbibed, are so morose, rigid, and self-willed; so impatient of all contradiction to, or discrepancy from their sentiments, that they cannot endure any to dissent in judgment, or vary in practice from them, without incurring their heavy disdain and censure. And, which makes the matter more desperate and remediless, such men commonly being least able either to manage their reason, or to command their passion, as guided wholly by certain blind impulses of fancy, or groundless prejudices of conceit, or by a partial admiration of some men's persons, examples, and authorities, are usually most resolute and peremptory in their courses, and thence hardly capable of any change, mitigation, or amendment. Of which sort there being divers engaged in several ways, it is impossible to please some, without disgusting the other; and difficult altogether to approach any of these wasps, without being stung or vexed by them. Some also are so apt to misunderstand men's meanings, to misconstrue their words, and to make ill descants upon, or draw bad consequences from their actions, that it is not possible to prevent their entertaining ill-favoured prejudices against even those that are heartily their friends, and wish them the best. To others the good and prosperous estate of their neighbour, that he flourishes in wealth, power, or reputation, is ground sufficient of hatred and enmity against him; for so we see that Cain hated his innocent brother Abel, because his brother's works were more righteous, and his sacrifices better accepted, than his own: that Joseph's brethren were mortally offended at him, because his father especially loved and delighted in him: that Saul was enraged against David, because his gallant deeds were celebrated with due praises and joyful acclamations of the people: and that the Babylonian princes upon no other score maligned Daniel, but because he enjoyed the favour of the king, and a dignity

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SERM. XXI. dignity anſwerable to his deſerts. And who, that loves his own welfare, can poſſibly avoid ſuch enmities as theſe? But the fatal rock, upon which peaceable deſigns are moſt inevitably ſplit, and which by no prudent ſteering our courſe can ſometimes be evaded, is the unreaſonable perverſeneſs of men's pretences, who ſometimes will upon no terms be friends with us, or allow us their good-will, but upon condition of concurring with them in diſhoneſt and unwarrantable practices; of omitting ſome duties, to which by the expreſs command of God, or evident dictates of right reaſon, we are obliged, or performing ſome action repugnant to thoſe indiſpenſable rules. But though peace with men is highly valuable, and poſſeſſing their good-will in worth not inferior to any other indifferent accommodation of life, yet are theſe nothing comparable to the favour of God, or the internal ſatisfaction of conſcience; nor, though we were aſſured thereby to gain the entire love and favour of all men living, are we to purchaſe them at ſo dear a rate, as with the loſs of theſe. We muſt not, to pleaſe or gratify men, commit any thing prohibited, or omit any thing enjoined by God, the leaſt glimpſe of whoſe favourable aſpect is infinitely more to be prized, than the moſt intimate friendſhip of the mightieſt monarchs upon earth; and the leaſt ſpark of whoſe indignation is more to be dreaded, than the extremeſt diſpleaſure of the whole world. In caſe of ſuch competition, we muſt reſolve with St. Paul, *Do I yet conciliate* * *God, or do I endeavour to ſoothe men? For if I yet ſoothed* (or flattered) *men,* (ſo you know ἀρέσκειν ſignifies) *I were not the ſervant of Chriſt.* Nor are we, that we may ſatisfy any man's pleaſure, to contravene the dictates of reaſon, (that ſubordinate guide of our actions) to do any diſhonourable or uncomely action, unworthy of a man, miſbeſeeming our education, or incongruous to our ſtation in human ſociety, ſo as to make ourſelves worthily deſpicable to the moſt by contenting ſome:

Gal. i. 10. * Πείθω.

nor

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nor are we bound always to desert our own consider- SERM.
able interest, or betray our just liberty, that we may XXI.
avoid the enmity of such as would violently or fraudulently encroach upon them. Nor are we in the administration of justice, distribution of rewards, or arbitration of controversies, to respect the particular favour of any, but the merits only of the cause, or the worth of the persons concerned. Nor are we by feeding men's distempered humours, or gratifying their abused fancies, to prejudice or neglect their real good; to encourage them in bad practices, to foment their irregular passions, to applaud their unjust or uncharitable censures, or to puff up their minds with vain conceit by servile flattery: but rather, like faithful physicians, to administer wholesome, though unsavoury, advice; to reveal to them their mistakes, to check their intended progress in bad courses, to reprove their faults seasonably, and when it may probably do them good, though possibly thereby we may provoke their anger, and procure their ill-will, and, as St. Paul saith, become their Gal. iv. 16. enemies, for telling them the truth. Nor are we ever explicitly to assent to falsehoods (so apprehended by us,) to belie our consciences, or contradict our real judgments; (though we may sometimes for peace sake prudently conceal them;) nor to deny the truth our defence and patronage, when in order to some good purpose it needs and requires them, though thereby we may incur the dislike, and forfeit the good-will of some men. Nor are we by entertaining any extraordinary friendship, intimate familiarity, or frequent converse with persons notoriously dissolute in their manners, disorderly in their behaviour, or erroneous in weighty points of opinion, to countenance their misdemeanors, dishonour our profession, render ourselves justly suspected, run the hazard of contagion, or hinder their reformation. And especially we are warily to decline the particular acquaintance of men of contentious dispositions,

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positions, miſchievous principles, and factious deſigns; a bare keeping company with whom looks like a conſpiracy, an approving or abetting their proceedings; the refuſing any encouragement, ſignification of eſteem, or vouchſafing any peculiar reſpect to ſuch, we owe to the honour of virtue, which they diſgrace, to the love of truth, which they oppugn, to the peace of the world, which they diſturb, and to the general good of mankind, which they impeach. And ſo St. Paul warns us not to *mingle* or conſort, not to *diet* or *common* (μὴ συναναμίγνυσθαι, and μὴ συνεσθίειν) with men of a diſſolute and diſorderly converſation: and, *to mark them which cauſe ſeditions, and ſcandals, contrary to Chriſtian doctrine, and to ſhun or decline them* (ἐκκλίνειν ἀπ' αὐτῶν) and to repudiate, deprecate the familiarity of heretics (Αἱρετικὸν ἄνθρωπον παραιτεῖσθαι.) And St. John forbids us to *wiſh joy*, or to allow the ordinary reſpects of civil ſalutation to apoſtates and impoſtors; *leſt* (by ſuch demonſtration of favour) *we communicate with them in their wicked works.* None of which precepts are intended to interdict to us, or to diſoblige us from bearing real good-will, or diſpenſing needful benefits to any, but to deter us from yielding any ſignal countenance to vice and impiety; and to excite us to declare ſuch diſlike and deteſtation of thoſe heinous enormities, as may confer to the reclaiming of theſe, and prevent the ſeduction of others. So St. Paul expreſsly, *But if any man obeyeth not our injunction by epiſtle, do not conſort with him, that he may by ſhame be reclaimed* (ἵνα ἐντραπῇ): And, *Account him not an enemy, but admoniſh him as a brother.* Nor ought, laſtly, the love of peace, and deſire of friendly correſpondence with any men, avert us from an honeſt zeal, (proportionable to our abilities and opportunities) of promoting the concernments of truth and goodneſs, though againſt powerful and dangerous oppoſition: I ſay an honeſt zeal, meaning thereby not that blind, heady paſſion, or inflammation of ſpirit, tranſporting men beyond the bounds

1 Cor. v. 11.

Ἀτάκτως περιπ. Rom. xvi. 17.

Tit. iii. 10.

2 Joh. 10.

2 Theſſ. iii. 14, 15.

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bounds of reaſon and diſcretion, upon ſome ſuperficially plauſible pretences, to violent and irregular practices; but a conſiderate and ſteady reſolution of mind, effectually animating a man by warrantable and decent means vigorouſly to proſecute commendable deſigns; like that St. Jude mentions, of *ſtriving earneſtly for the faith once delivered to the ſaints.* Jude 3. For this zeal may be very conſiſtent with, yea, greatly conducible to, the deſigns of peace. And 'tis not a drowſineſs, a ſlack remiſſneſs, a heartleſs diffidence, or a cowardly flinching from the face of danger and oppoſition, we diſcourſe about, or plead for; but a wiſe and wary declining the occaſions of needleſs and unprofitable diſturbance to ourſelves and others. SERM. XXI.

To conclude this point, (which, if time would have permitted, I ſhould have handled more fully and diſtinctly,) though to preſerve peace, and purchaſe the good-will of men, we may and ought to quit much of our private intereſt and ſatisfaction, yet ought we not to ſacrifice to them what is not our own, nor committed abſolutely to our diſpoſal, and which in value incomparably tranſcends them, the maintenance of truth, the advancement of juſtice, the practice of virtue, the quiet of our conſcience, the favour of Almighty God. And if, for being dutiful to God, and faithful to ourſelves in theſe particulars, any men will hate, vex, and deſpite us; fruſtrate our deſires, and defeat our purpoſes of living peaceably with all men in this world; we may comfort ourſelves in the enjoyment of eternal peace and ſatisfaction of mind, in the aſſurance of the divine favour, in the hopes of eternal reſt and tranquillity in the world to come.

Now briefly to induce us to the practice of this duty of living peaceably, we may conſider,

1. *How good and pleaſant a thing it is*, as David ſaith, *for brethren* (and ſo we are all at leaſt by nature) *to live together in unity.* How that, as Solomon ſaith, Pſ. cxxxiii. 1.

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Prov. xvii. 1.

ſaith, *Better is a dry morſel, and quietneſs therewith, than a houſe full of ſacrifices with ſtrife.* How delicious that converſation is, which is accompanied with a mutual confidence, freedom, courteſy, and complacence: how calm the mind, how compoſed the affections, how ſerene the countenance, how melodious the voice, how ſweet the ſleep, how contentful the whole life is of him, that neither deviſeth miſchief againſt others, nor ſuſpects any to be contrived againſt himſelf; and, contrariwiſe, how ingrateful and loathſome a thing it is to abide in a ſtate of enmity, wrath, diſſenſion; having the thoughts diſtracted with ſolicitous care, anxious ſuſpicion, envious regret; the heart boiling with choler, the face overclouded with diſcontent, the tongue jarring and out of tune, the ears filled with diſcordant noiſes of contradiction, clamour, and reproach; the whole frame of body and ſoul diſtempered and diſturbed with the worſt of paſſions. How much more comfortable it is to walk in ſmooth and even paths, than to wander in rugged ways, overgrown with briars, obſtructed with rubs, and beſet with ſnares; to ſail ſteadily in a quiet, than to be toſſed in a tempeſtuous ſea; to behold the lovely face of heaven ſmiling with a cheerful ſerenity, than to ſee it frowning with clouds, or raging with ſtorms; to hear harmonious conſents, than diſſonant janglings; to ſee objects correſpondent in graceful ſymmetry, than lying diſorderly in confuſed heaps; to be in health, and have the natural humours conſent in moderate temper, than (as it happens in diſeaſes) agitated with tumultuous commotions: how all ſenſes and faculties of man unanimouſly rejoice in thoſe emblems of peace, order, harmony, and proportion: yea, how nature univerſally delights in a quiet ſtability, or undiſturbed progreſs of motion; the beauty, ſtrength, and vigour of every thing requires a concurrence of force, cooperation, and contribution of help; all things thrive and flouriſh by communicating reciprocal aid, and

Vid. Clem. ad Cor. p. 27, &c.

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the world ſubſiſts by a friendly conſpiracy of its parts; and eſpecially that political ſociety of men chiefly aims at peace as its end, depends on it as its cauſe, relies on it as its ſupport. How much a peaceful ſtate reſembles heaven, into which neither *complaint*, *pain*, nor *clamour* (οὔτε πένθος, οὔτε πόνος, οὔτε κραυγή, as it is in the Apocalypſe) do ever enter; but bleſſed ſouls converſe together in perfect love, and in perpetual concord; and how a condition of enmity repreſents the ſtate of hell, that black and diſmal region of dark hatred, fiery wrath, and horrible tumult. How like a paradiſe the world would be, flouriſhing in joy and reſt, if men would cheerfully conſpire in affection, and helpfully contribute to each other's content: and how like a ſavage wilderneſs now it is, when, like wild beaſts, they vex and perſecute, worry and devour each other. How not only philoſophy hath placed the ſupreme pitch of happineſs in a calmneſs of mind, and tranquillity of life, void of care and trouble, of irregular paſſions and perturbations; but that holy Scripture itſelf in that one term of peace moſt uſually comprehends all joy and content, all felicity and proſperity: ſo that the heavenly conſort of angels, when they agree moſt highly to bleſs, and to wiſh the greateſt happineſs to mankind, could not better expreſs their ſenſe, than by ſaying, *Be on earth peace, and good-will among men.*

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Apoc. xxi.

Better is a dinner of herbs where love is, than a ſtalled ox and hatred therewith. Prov. xv. 17.

Ἀταραξία.

Luke ii. 14.

2. That as nothing is more ſweet and delightful, ſo nothing more comely and agreeable to human nature than peaceable living, it being, as Solomon ſaith, *an honour to a man to ceaſe from ſtrife*; and conſequently alſo a diſgrace to him to continue therein: that rage and fury may be the excellencies of beaſts, and the exerting their natural animoſity in ſtrife and combat may become them; but reaſon and diſcretion are the ſingular eminencies of men, and the uſe of theſe the moſt natural and commendable method of deciding controverſies among them: and that it

Prov. xx. 3.

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SERM. XXI. extremely misbecomes them that are endowed with those excellent faculties so to abuse them, as not to apprehend each other's meanings, but to ground vexatious quarrels upon the mistake of them; not to be able by reasonable expedients to compound differences, but with mutual damage and inconvenience to prorogue and increase them: not to discern how exceedingly better it is to be helpful and beneficial, than to be mischievous and troublesome to one another. How foolishly and unskilfully they judge, that think by unkind speech and harsh dealing to allay men's distempers, alter their opinions, or remove their prejudices; as if they should attempt to kill by ministering nourishment, or to extinguish a flame by pouring oil upon it. How childish a thing it is eagerly to contend about trifles, for the superiority in some impertinent contest, for the satisfaction of some petty humour, for the possession of some inconsiderable toy: yea, how barbarous and brutish a thing it is to be fierce and impetuous in the pursuit of things that please us, snarling at, biting, and tearing all competitors of our game, or opposers of our undertaking. But how divine and amiable, how worthy of human nature, of civil breeding, of prudent consideration it is, to restrain partial desires, to condescend to equal terms, to abate from rigorous pretences, to appease discords, and vanquish enmities by courtesy and discretion; like the best and wisest commanders, who by skilful conduct, and patient attendance upon opportunity, without striking of stroke, or shedding of blood, subdue their enemy.

3. How that peace with its near alliance and concomitants, its causes and effects, love, meekness, gentleness, and patience, are in sacred writ reputed
Gal. v. the genuine fruits of the Holy Spirit, issues of divine grace, and offsprings of heavenly wisdom; producing like themselves a goodly progeny of righteous deeds. But that emulation, hatred, wrath, variance, and strife

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ſtrife derive their extraction from fleſhly luſt, helliſh craft, or beaſtly folly; propagating themſelves alſo into a like ugly brood of wicked works. For ſo ſaith St. James, *If ye have bitter zeal and ſtrife in your hearts, glory not, *nor be deceived untruly: This wiſdom deſcendeth not from above, but is earthly, ſenſual, and deviliſh: For where emulation and ſtrife are, there is † tumult, and every ‡ naughty thing: but the wiſdom that is from above is firſt pure, then peaceable, gentle, §obſequious, full of mercy,* (or beneficence) *and of good fruits, without partiality and diſſimulation: And the fruit of righteouſneſs is ſowed in peace to thoſe that make peace: And from whence are wars and quarrels among you? Are they not hence, even from your luſts, that war in your members?* Likewiſe, *He loveth tranſgreſſion that loveth ſtrife*; and, *A fool's lips enter into contention, and his mouth calleth for ſtrokes*, ſaith Solomon. That the moſt wicked and miſerable of creatures is deſcribed by titles denoting enmity and diſcord: *the hater* (Satan), *the enemy* (ὁ ἐχθρὸς ἄνθρωπος), *the accuſer* (ὁ κατήγορος), *the ſlanderer* (ὁ διάβολος), *the deſtroyer* (ὁ ἀπολλύων), the furious dragon, and miſchievouſly treacherous ſnake: and how ſad it is to imitate him in his practices, to reſemble him in his qualities[d]. But that the beſt, moſt excellent, and moſt happy of beings delights to be ſtyled, and accordingly to expreſs himſelf, *The God of love, mercy, and peace*; and his bleſſed Son to be called, and to be, *The Prince of peace*, the great *Mediator*, *Reconciler*, and *Peace-maker*; who is alſo ſaid from on high to have viſited us, *To give light to them that ſit in darkneſs, and in the ſhadow of death; and to guide our feet in the ways of peace.* That, laſtly, no devotion is

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Jam. iii. 14—18. iv. 1.

* Καὶ μὴ

† ἐυδέσ δε καὶ τὰ τ᾽ς ἀλλ᾽ δε ας.

† Ἀκαταςα σ α, confuſion.

‡ Φαῦλον πράγμα.

§ Εὐπειθὴς.

[d] Prov. xvii. 19. xviii. 6. Qui poſuit in cœlo bellum, in paradiſo fraudem, odium inter primos fratres. *Aug.* Matt. xiii. 28. Ἀντίδικος, 1 Pet. v. 8. A murderer, John viii. 44.

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SERM. XXI. pleasing, no oblation acceptable to God, conjoined with hatred, or proceeding from an unreconciled mind: for, *If thou bring thy gift to the altar, and there remembereſt that thy brother hath aught againſt thee; leave there thy gift before the altar, and go thy way; firſt be reconciled to thy brother, and then come and offer thy gift*, ſaith our Saviour [e].

Matt. v. 23, 24.

I cloſe up all with this corollary: that if we muſt live lovingly and peaceably with all men, then much more are we obliged to do ſo with all Chriſtians: to whom by nearer and firmer bands of holy alliance we are related; by more precious communions in faith and devotion we are endeared; by more peculiar and powerful obligations of divine commands, ſacramental vows, and formal profeſſions we are engaged: our ſpiritual brethren, members of the ſame myſtical body, temples of the ſame holy Spirit, ſervants of the ſame Lord, ſubjects of the ſame Prince, profeſſors of the ſame truth, partakers of the ſame hope, heirs of the ſame promiſe, and candidates of the ſame everlaſting happineſs.

Now Almighty God, the moſt good and beneficent Maker, gracious Lord, and merciful Preſerver of all things, infuſe into our hearts thoſe heavenly graces of meekneſs, patience, and benignity, grant us and his whole church, and all his creation, to ſerve him quietly here, and in a bliſsful reſt to praiſe and magnify him for ever: to whom, with his bleſſed Son, the great Mediator and Prince of peace, and with his holy Spirit, the ever-flowing Spring of all love, joy, comfort, and peace, be all honour, glory, and praiſe. And,

[e] 2 Cor. xiii. 11. Philip. iv. 9. 1 Theſſ. v. 23. 2 Theſſ. iii. 16. Heb. vii. Luke i. 79. Χαίρει γὰρ τῇ συμφωνίᾳ λογικῶν τῶν ζώων ὁ θεὸς, καὶ ἐκτρέπεται τὴν διαφωνίαν. *Orig. c. Celſ.* 8. (p. 424.)

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SERM. XXI.

The peace of God, which paſſeth all underſtanding, keep your hearts and minds in the knowledge and love of God, and of his Son Jeſus Chriſt our Lord; and the bleſſing of God Almighty, the Father, Son, and Holy Ghoſt, be among you, and remain with you for ever. Amen.

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SERMON XXII*.

The Duty and Reward of Bounty to the Poor.

PSAL. cxii. 9.

He hath diſperſed, he hath given to the poor; his righteouſneſs endureth for ever, his horn ſhall be exalted with honour.

AS this whole Pſalm appears to have a double intent; one to deſcribe the proper actions and affections of a truly religious or pious man; (of a man *who feareth the Lord, and delighteth greatly in his commandments*;) the other to declare the happineſs of ſuch a man's ſtate, conſequent upon thoſe his affections and actions, whether in way of natural reſult, or of gracious recompence from God: ſo doth this verſe particularly contain both a good part of a pious man's character, and ſome conſiderable inſtances of his felicity. The firſt words (*He hath diſperſed, he hath given to the poor*) expreſs part of his character; the latter (*His righteouſneſs endureth for ever, his horn ſhall be exalted with honour*) aſſign inſtances of his felicity. So that our text hath two parts, one affording us good information concerning our duty, the other yielding great encouragement to the performance thereof; for we are obliged to follow the pious man's practice, and ſo doing we ſhall aſſuredly par-

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v. 1.

* This Sermon was preached at the Spittal upon Wedneſday in Eaſter Week, A. D. 1671.

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SERM. XXII. take of his condition. These parts we shall in order prosecute, endeavouring (by God's assistance) somewhat to illustrate the words themselves, to confirm the truths couched in them, and to inculcate the duties which they imply.

For the first part, *He hath dispersed, he hath given to the poor*; these words in general do import the liberal bounty and mercy which a pious man is wont to exercise; doing which doth in good part constitute him pious, and signally declareth him such; is a necessary ingredient of his piety, and a conspicuous mark thereof. But particularly they insinuate some things concerning the nature, the matter, the manner, and the object of those acts.

He hath dispersed, he hath given. Those words being put indefinitely, or without determining what is dispersed and given by him, may be supposed to imply a kind of universality in the matter of his beneficence; that he bestoweth whatever he hath within compass of his possession, or his power; his τὰ ὑπάρχοντα, (the things which he hath) and his τὰ ἐνόντα, (the things which he may) according to the prescriptions of our Lord in the Gospel. Every thing, I say, which he hath in substance, or can do by his endeavour, that may conduce to the support of the life, or the health, or the welfare in any kind of his neighbour, to the succour or relief of his indigency, to the removal or easement of his affliction, he may well here be understood to disperse and give. Feeding the hungry, clothing the naked, visiting the sick, entertaining the stranger, ransoming the captive, easing the oppressed, comforting the sorrowful, assisting the weak, instructing or advising the ignorant, together with all such kinds or instances of beneficence, may be conceived either meant directly as the matter of the good man's dispersing and giving, or by just analogy of reason reducible thereto: substantial alms, as the most sensible and obvious matter of bounty, was ('tis probable) especially intended, but thence no manner of expressing

Luke xii. 33. xi. 41.

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preſſing it is to be excluded; for the ſame reaſons which oblige us, the ſame affections which diſpoſe us to beſtow our money, or deal our bread, will equally bind and move us to contribute our endeavour and advice, for the ſuſtenance and comfort of our poor neighbour. Anſwerably our diſcourſe will more expreſsly regard the principal matter, liberal communication of our goods; but it may be referred to all ſorts of beneficence. SERM. XXII.

Farther, the word *diſperſed* intimateth the nature of his bounty, in excluſion of practices different from it. He *diſperſeth*, and is therefore not tenacious, doth not hoard up his goods, or keep them cloſe to himſelf, for the gratifying his covetous humour, or nouriſhing his pride, or pampering his ſenſuality; but ſendeth them abroad for the uſe and benefit of others. He *diſperſeth* his goods, and therefore doth not fling them away altogether, as if he were angry with them, or weary of them, as if he loathed or deſpiſed them; but fairly and ſoftly, with good conſideration he diſpoſeth of them here and there, as reaſon and need do require. He *diſperſeth* them *to the poor*, not diſſipateth them among vain or lewd perſons in wanton or wicked profuſions, in riotous exceſſes, in idle divertiſements, in expenſive curioſities, in hazardous gamings, in any ſuch courſes which ſwallow whole all that a man hath, or do ſo cripple him, that he becomes unable to diſperſe any thing: our good man is to be underſtood wiſely provident, honeſtly induſtrious, and ſoberly frugal, that he may have wherewith to be juſt firſt, and then liberal [a].

His *diſperſing* alſo (or *ſcattering*, ſo the * Hebrew word here uſed is otherwhere rendered: *There is*, ſaith the Wiſe Man, *that ſcattereth, and yet increaſeth:* where we may remark, that this word * Eph. iv. 28. זור Prov. xi. 24.

[a] Οὐ γὰρ οἷόν τε χρήμαθ' ἕξειν μὴ ἐπιμελόμενον ὅπως ἕξῃ. *Ariſt. Eth.* iv. 1.

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SERM. XXII. singly by itself, without any adjunct matter to limit or interpret it, is used to signify this kind of practice. This his *dispersing*, I say also) denotes the extent of the pious man's bounty, that it is very large and diffusive, and in a manner unrestrained; that it reacheth to many places, and is withheld from no persons within the verge of his power, and opportunity to do good. This practice commonly by a like phrase (unto which perhaps this word refers) is termed
2 Cor. ix. 6. *sowing: He*, saith St. Paul, *which soweth sparingly,*
10.
Gal. vi. 7, 8. *shall also reap sparingly*; *and he which soweth bountifully,*
Prov. xi. 18. *shall also reap bountifully.* Now, he that soweth, having chosen a good soil, and a fit season, doth not regard one particular spot, but throweth all about so much as his hand can hold, so far as the strength of his arm doth carry. It is likewise called *watering,*
Prov. xi. 25. *(He that watereth,* saith Solomon, *shall be watered himself:)* which expression also seemeth to import a plentiful and promiscuous effusion of good, dropping in showers upon dry and parched places; that is, upon persons dry for want, or parched with affliction. So the good man doth not plant his bounty in one small hole, or spout it on one narrow spot, but with an open hand disseminates it, with an impartial regard distills it all about. He stints it not to his own family or relations; to his neighbours or friends, or benefactors; to those of his own sect and opinion, or of his humour and disposition; to such as serve him, or oblige him, or please him; whom some private interest ties, or some particular affection endears him to: but scatters it indifferently and unconfinedly toward all men that need it; toward mere strangers, yea, toward known enemies; toward such who never did him any good, or can ever be able to do any; yea, even toward them who have done evil to him, and may be presumed ready to do more. Nothing in his neighbour but absence of need, nothing in himself but defect of ability, doth curb or limit his beneficence.

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beneficence [b]. In that προθυμία (that proclivity and promptitude of mind) which St. Paul speaketh of, he doth good every where: wherever a man is, there is a room for his wishing well, and doing good, if he can: he observes that rule of the Apostle, *As we have opportunity, let us do good unto all men.* So the pious man hath *dispersed*. It follows,

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2 Cor viii. 12. Ubicunque homo est, ibi beneficio locus est. *Sen. de Vit. B.* cap. 24. Gal. vi. 10. 2 Cor. ix. 13.

He hath given to the poor. These words denote the freeness of his bounty, and determine the principal object thereof: he not only lendeth (though he also doth that upon reasonable occasion; for, *A good man*, as it is said before in this Psalm, *sheweth mercy, and lendeth*; and otherwhere, *The righteous is ever merciful, and lendeth*; he, I say, not only sometimes willingly lendeth) to those who in time may repay, or requite him; but he freely giveth to the poor, that is, to those from whom he can expect no retribution back. He doth not (as good and pious, he doth not) present the rich: to do so is but a cleanly way of begging, or a subtile kind of trade; 'tis hardly courtesy; 'tis surely no bounty; for such persons (if they are not very sordid or very careless, and such men are not usually much troubled with presents) will, it is likely, over-do him, or at least will be even with him in kindness. In doing this, there is little virtue; for it there will be small reward. For, *If you do good to them who do good to you,* (or whom you conceive able and disposed to requite you,) ποία χάρις, *what thanks* are due to you? For that, saith our Saviour, *even sinners* (even men notoriously bad) *do the same: And if you lend to them from whom you hope to receive, what thanks have you? For sinners even lend to sinners, to receive as much again.* All men commonly, the bad no less than the good, are apt to be superfluously kind in heaping favours

Pfal. cxii. 5. Pfal. xxxvii. 26. Qui divitiè donat, petit. He that giveth to the rich shall surely come to want. Prov. xxii. 16. Luke vi. 33, 34.

[b] Ἐὰν ἴδῃς τινὰ κακῶς πάσχοντα, μηδὲν περιεργάζῃ λοιπόν· ἔχει τὸ δικαίωμα τῆ βοηθείας, τῆ κακῶς παθεῖν αὐτόν·—τῆ Θεῆ ἐστι, κἂν Ἕλλην, κἂν Ἰουδαῖος. *Chryf. in Heb, Orat.* 10.

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on thoſe whom fortune befriends, and whoſe condition requires not their courteſy; every one almoſt is ready to adopt himſelf into the kindred, or to ſcrew himſelf into the friendſhip of the wealthy and proſperous [c]: but where kindred is of uſe, there it is ſeldom found; it is commonly ſo deaf, as not to hear when it is called; ſo blind, as not to diſcern its proper object, and natural ſeaſon, *(the time of adverſity, for which a brother is born.)* Men diſclaim alliance with the needy, and ſhun his acquaintance; ſo the Wiſe Man obſerved, *All the brethren of the poor do hate him; how much more do his friends go far from him?* Thus it is in vulgar practice: but the pious man is more judicious, more juſt, and more generous in the placing of his favours; he is courteous to purpoſe, he is good to thoſe who need. He, as ſuch, doth not make large entertainments *for his friends, his brethren, his kindred, his rich neighbours*; but obſerves that precept of our Lord, *When thou makeſt a feaſt, call the poor, the maimed, the lame, the blind, and thou ſhalt be bleſſed: for they cannot recompenſe thee; thou ſhalt be recompenſed at the reſurrection of the juſt.* Thus the pious man giveth, that is, with a free heart and pure intention beſtoweth his goods on the indigent, without deſigning any benefit, or hoping for any requital to himſelf; except from God, in conſcience, reſpect, and love to whom he doth it.

Prov. xvii. 17.

Prov. xix. 7. 4.

Εὖ φρόνησις· τὰ φίλων δ' οὐκ ἔστιν, ὅστις δυσχεῖ. *Eurip.*

Luke xiv. 12, 13, 14.

It may be alſo material to obſerve the form of ſpeech here uſed, in reference to the time: *He hath diſperſed, and he hath given*; or, *He doth diſperſe, he doth give*, (for in the Hebrew language the paſt and preſent times are not diſtinguiſhed:) which manner of ſpeaking may ſeem to intimate the reality, or the certainty, and the conſtancy of his practice in this kind; for what is paſt or preſent, we are infallibly ſe-

[c] Ὅταν δ' ὁ δαίμων εὖ διδῷ, τί χρὴ φίλων; Ἀρκεῖ γὰρ αὐτὸς ὁ θεὸς ὠφελεῖν φίλων. *Eurip. in Oreſt.*

Τῶν εὐτυχούντων πᾶσιν ἴσον συγγενεῖς.

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cure of; and in morals, what one is said to have done, or to do, is always understood according to habit or custom. It is not, *He will disperse, he will give*; that were no fit description of a good man; to pretend to, would be no argument of piety; those words might import uncertainty, and delay in his practice. He that saith, *I will give*, may be fallacious in his professions, may be inconsistent with his resolutions, may wilfully or negligently let slip the due season of performing it. Our good man is not a *Doson*, or *Will-give*, (like that king of Macedon, who got that name from often signifying an intention of giving, but never giving in effect;) he not only purposes well, and promises fairly for the future, but he hath effectually done it, and perseveres doing it upon every fit occasion. He puts not his neighbour into tedious expectations, nor puts him off with frivolous excuses, saying to him, as it is in the Proverbs, *Go, and come again, and to-morrow I will give, when he hath it by him:* He bids him not have patience, or says unto him, *Depart in peace*, when his need is urgent, and his pain impatient, when hunger or cold do then pinch him, when sickness incessantly vexeth him, when present straits and burthens oppress him; but he affordeth a ready, quick, and seasonable relief.

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Ἐπεκλήθη δὲ Δώσων ὡς ἐπ' ἀγαθῷ τινὶ μᾶλλον, ἢ τελεσιουργὸς δὲ τῶν ὑποσχέσεων. *Plut. in Paulo Æmil.*

Prov. iii. 28. Jam. ii. 16.

He hath dispersed, and *given*, while he lives, not reserving the disposal of all at once upon his death, or by his last will; that unwilling will, whereby men would seem to give somewhat, when they can keep nothing; drawing to themselves those commendations and thanks, which are only due to their mortality; whenas were they immortal, they would never be liberal: No; it is, *he hath freely dispersed*; not an inevitable necessity will extort it from him; it cannot be said of him, that he never does well, but when he dies; so he hath done it really and surely.

Avarus, nisi cum moritur, nil recte facit. *Laber.*

He also doth it constantly, through all the course of

SERM. XXII. of his life, whenever good opportunity preſents itſelf. He doth it not by fits, or by accident, according to unſtable cauſes or circumſtances moving him, (when bodily temper or humour inclineth him, when a ſad object makes vehement impreſſion on him, when ſhame obligeth him to comply with the practice of others, when he may thereby promote ſome deſign, or procure ſome glory to himſelf,) but his practice is conſtant and uniform, being drawn from ſteady principles, and guided by certain rules, proceeding from reverence to God, and good-will toward man, following the clear dictates and immutable laws of conſcience. Thus hath the pious man *diſperſed*, and *given to the poor:* and let thus much ſuffice for explicatory reflection upon the firſt words.

The main drift and purport of which is, to repreſent the liberal exerciſing of bounty and mercy, to be the neceſſary duty, the ordinary practice, and the proper character of a truly pious man; ſo that performing ſuch acts is a good ſign of true piety; and omitting them is a certain argument of ungodlineſs. For the demonſtration of which points, and for exciting us to a practice anſwerable, I ſhall propound ſeveral conſiderations, whereby the plain reaſonableneſs, the great weight, the high worth and excellency of this duty, together with its ſtrict connection with other principal duties of piety, will appear. And firſt, I will ſhew with what advantage the holy Scripture repreſents it to us, or preſſes it upon us.

I. Head of diſcourſe. 1. We may conſider, that there is no ſort of duties which God hath more expreſsly commanded, or more earneſtly inculcated, than theſe of bounty and mercy toward our brethren: whence evidently the great moment of them, and their high value in God's eſteem may be inferred. Even in the ancient law, we may obſerve very careful proviſions made for engaging men to works of this kind, and the performance of them is with huge life and urgency prescribed. Deut. xv. 7. *Thou ſhalt not harden thy heart, nor ſhut thine*

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thine hand from thy poor brother.—Thou ſhalt open thy hand wide unto thy brother, unto thy poor, and to thy needy in the land. So did Moſes, in God's name, with language very ſignificant and emphatical, enjoin to the children of Iſrael. The holy prophets alſo do commonly with an eſpecial heat and vigour preſs theſe duties, moſt ſmartly reproving the tranſgreſſion or neglect of them; eſpecially when they reclaim men from their wicked courſes, urging them ſeriouſly to return unto God and goodneſs, they propoſe this practice as a ſingular inſtance moſt expreſſive of their converſion, moſt apt to appeaſe God's wrath, moſt effectual to the recovery of his favour. *Waſh you*, ſaith God in Iſaiah, *make you clean; put away the evil of your doings from before mine eyes; ceaſe to do evil, learn to do well.* So in general he exhorts to repentance: then immediately he ſubjoins theſe choice inſtances thereof: *Seek judgment, relieve the oppreſſed, judge the fatherleſs, plead for the widow.—Come now*, then he adds, *let us reaſon together: though your ſins be as ſcarlet, they ſhall be as white as ſnow; though they be red like crimſon, they ſhall be as wool.* When Daniel would preſcribe to king Nebuchadnezzar the beſt way of amendment and the ſureſt means of averting God's judgments impendent on him, he thus ſpeaks: *Wherefore, O king, let my counſel be acceptable unto thee; break off thy ſins by righteouſneſs, and thine iniquities by ſhewing mercy to the poor* [d]. This he culled out as of all pious acts chiefly grateful to God, and clearly teſtifying repentance; and, *ſo very impious a perſon was alms able to juſtify*, ſays the Father thereupon [e]. So alſo when God himſelf would declare what thoſe acts are which render penitential devotions moſt agreeable

Deut. xv. 11.

Iſa. i. 16, 17.

Iſa. i. 17, 18. Jer. vii. 5, 6.

Dan. iv. 27.

[d] Τὰς ἁμαρτίας σου ἐλεημοσύναις λύτρωσαι· ſo the LXX render thoſe words, reading, it ſeems, פדה for פרק.

[e] Ναβυχοδονόσορ, τὸν τοιοῦτον ἀσεβῆ, ἴσχυσεν ἡ ἐλεημοσύνη δικαιῶσαι. *Athan. ad Antioch. Quæſt.* 87.

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SERM. XXII. to him, and most effectual, he thus expresseth his mind: *Is not this the fast which I have chosen? To loose the bands of wickedness, to undo the heavy burthens, to let the oppressed go free, and that ye break every yoke? Is it not to deal thy bread to the hungry, and that thou bring the poor that are cast out to thine house? when thou seest the naked, that thou cover him; and that thou hide not thyself from thine own flesh?* Of so great consideration and moment was this sort of duties, even under that old dispensation of weakness, servility, and fear; so much tenderness of compassion and benignity did God exact even from that hardhearted and worldly people, who were so little capable of the best rules, and had encouragements, in comparison, so mean toward performances of this nature. The same we may well conceive, under the more perfect discipline of universal amity, of ingenuity, of spiritual grace and goodness in a higher strain, with more force and greater obligation to be imposed on us, who have so much stronger engagements, and immensely greater encouragements to them. And so indeed it is: for those precepts delivered by our Lord, *Sell all that you have, and give alms; If thou wilt be perfect, sell all that thou hast, and give to the poor; Give to every man that asketh thee; Treasure not up to yourselves treasures upon the earth*, do indeed sound high, but are not insignificant or impertinent. They cannot signify or design less, than that we should be always, in affection and disposition of mind, ready to part with any thing we have for the succour of our poor brethren; that to the utmost of our ability (according to moral estimation prudently rated) upon all occasions we should really express that disposition in our practice; that we are exceedingly obliged to the continual exercise of these duties in a very eminent degree. These indeed were the duties which our Lord, as he did frequently in his discourse commend and prescribe, so he did most signally exemplify in his practice; his whole life being in effect but one continual act of

Isa. lviii. 6, 7.

Luke xii. 33. vi. 30. xi. 41. Matt. xix. 21. vi. 19.

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of moſt liberal bounty and mercy toward mankind; in charity to whom he outdid his own ſevereſt rules, being content never to poſſeſs any wealth, never to enjoy any eaſe in this world. And therein (both as to doctrine and practice) did the holy Apoſtles cloſely follow their Maſter: *As poor, yet enriching many; as having nothing, yet poſſeſſing all things.* So they throughly in deeds practiſed theſe duties, which in words they taught, and earneſtly preſſed; admoniſhing their converts to [a] *diſtribute to the neceſſities of the ſaints*, to [b] *do good to all men*; [c] *to do good, and to communicate not to forget; to ſhew mercy with cheerfulneſs*, to [d] *put on bowels of mercy*; to [e] *be kind and tender-hearted one toward another*; to *abound in the grace of liberality*. Such are their directions and injunctions to all Chriſtian people; ſo did they preach themſelves, and ſo they enjoined others to preach. *Charge the rich in this world*, ſaith St. Paul to his ſcholar Timothy, *that they do good, that they be rich in good works, ready to diſtribute, willing to communicate:* and, *Theſe things*, ſaith he likewiſe, adviſing biſhop Titus, *I will that thou affirm conſtantly, that they which believe in God may be careful to maintain good works:* what *good works* he meaneth, the reaſon adjoined doth ſhew; *For theſe things*, ſaith he, *are good and profitable unto men.*

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2 Cor. vi. 10.

[a] Rom. xii. 13. [b] Gal. vi. 10. [c] Heb. xiii. 16. [d] Coloſſ. iii. 12. [e] Eph. iv. 32. 2 Cor. viii. 7. 1 Tim. vi. 17, 18.

Tit. iii. 8.

2. It is indeed obſervable, that as in every kind that which is moſt excellent doth commonly aſſume to itſelf the name of the whole kind; ſo among the parts of righteouſneſs, (which word is uſed to comprehend all virtue and goodneſs) this of exerciſing bounty and mercy is peculiarly called *righteouſneſs*; ſo that *righteouſneſs* and *mercifulneſs*, (or *alms-deeds*) the righteous and bountiful perſon, are in Scripture expreſſion ordinarily confounded, as it were, or undiſtinguiſhably put one for the other; it being often, when commendations are given to righteouſneſs, and rewards promiſed to righteous perſons, hard to diſcern, whether the general obſervance of

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God's law, or the special practice of these duties, are concerned in them. Likewise works of this nature are in way of peculiar excellency termed *good works*; and to perform them is usually styled, *to do good*, and *to do well*; ([a] ἀγαθὸν ἐργάζεσθαι, [b] καλὸν ποιεῖν, [c] ἀγαθοεργεῖν, [d] ἀγαθοποιεῖν, [e] εὐποιεῖν, [f] εὐεργετεῖν, are words applied to this purpose) which manners of expression do argue the eminent dignity of these performances.

[a] Acts ix. 36. [b] 1 Tim. v. 10. vi. 18. Tit. iii. 8. 14. [c] 2 Cor. ix. 8. [d] Gal. vi. 9. [e] 10. [f] Luke vi. 35. [g] Heb. xiii. 16. [h] Acts x. 38.

3. We may also consequently mark, that in those places of Scripture where the divine law is abridged, and religion summed up into a few particulars of main importance, these duties constantly make a part: so when the Prophet Micah briefly reckons up those things which are best in the law, and chiefly required by God, the whole catalogue of them consisting but of three particulars, *mercy* comes in for one; *He hath shewed thee, O man*, saith he, *what is good: and what doth the Lord require of thee, but to do justly, and to love mercy, and to walk humbly with thy God?* Likewise of those (βαρύτερα τῦ νόμυ, those) more substantial and *weighty things of God's law*, the neglect of which our Saviour objecteth as an argument of impiety, and a cause of woe, to those pretending zealots, this is one: *Woe unto you, Scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites; for ye pay tithe of mint and cumin, and have omitted the weightier matters of the law, judgment, mercy, and faith.* The sum of St. John the Baptist's instruction of the people is by St. Luke reduced to this point; *The people asked him, saying, What shall we do?* He answering saith unto them, *He that hath two coats, let him impart to him that hath none; and he that hath meat, let him do likewise.* St. James's system of religion is this; *Pure and undefiled religion before God and the Father is this, to visit the fatherless and widow in their affliction*, (that is, to comfort and relieve all distressed and helpless persons) *and to keep himself unspotted from the world.* St. Paul seems to be yet more compendious and close: *Bear*

Micah vi. 8. Matt. xxiii. 23. Luke iii. 10, 11. Jam. i. 27. Gal. vi. 2.

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ye, ſaith he, *one another's burdens, and ſo fulfil the law of Chriſt*. Yea, God himſelf compriſeth all the ſubſtantial part of religion herein, when comparing it with the circumſtantial part, he ſaith, *I will have mercy, and not ſacrifice*. Hoſ. vi. 6.

4. It is in like manner conſiderable, that in the general deſcriptions of piety and goodneſs, the practice of theſe duties is ſpecified, as a grand ingredient of them. In this Pſalm, where ſuch a deſcription is intended, it is almoſt the only particular inſtance; and it is not only mentioned, but reiterated in divers forms of expreſſion. In the 37th Pſalm it is affirmed and repeated, that *The righteous ſheweth mercy; he ſheweth mercy, and giveth; he ſheweth mercy, and lendeth*. In the Proverbs, 'tis a commendation of the virtuous woman, *whoſe price is far above rubies*, that *ſhe ſtretcheth out her hand to the poor, yea, ſtretcheth forth both her hands to the needy*. And in Ezekiel, (which is eſpecially remarkable) the 18th chapter, where the principal things conſtituting a pious man are more than once profeſſedly enumerated, this among a very few other particulars is expreſſed, and taketh up much room in the account; of ſuch a perſon (who *ſhall ſurely live, and not die*, that is, who certainly ſhall abide in God's favour, and enjoy the happy conſequences thereof) it is ſuppoſed, that he *neither hath oppreſſed any, nor hath withholden the pledge, nor hath ſpoiled by violence; but hath given his bread to the hungry, and hath covered the naked with a garment, and hath taken off his hand from the poor*.

Pſ. xxxvii. 21. 26. The righteous giveth, and ſpareth not. Prov. xxi. 26. Prov. xxii. 20. Ezek. xviii. 7. 16.

5. Alſo in the particular hiſtories of good men this ſort of practice is ſpecially taken notice of, and expreſſed in their characters. In the ſtory of our father Abraham, his benignity to ſtrangers, and hoſpitableneſs, is remarkable among all his deeds of goodneſs, being propounded to us as a pattern and encouragement to the like practice. In this the conſcience of Job did ſolace itſelf, as in a ſolid aſ-

Heb. xiii. 2.

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SERM. XXII. surance of his integrity: *I delivered the poor that cried, and the fatherless, and him that had none to help him. The blessing of him that was ready to perish came upon me, and I caused the widow's heart to sing. I was eyes to the blind, and feet I was to the lame; I was a father to the poor. Did not I weep for him that was in trouble? Was not my soul grieved for the poor?* Hence also did the good publican recommend himself to the favour and approbation of our Saviour, saying, *Behold, Lord, half of my goods I give to the poor:* hence did *salvation come to* his *house:* hence he is proclaimed, *a son of Abraham.* Of Dorcas, that good woman, who was so gracious and precious among the Disciples, this is the commendation and character; *She was full of good works and alms-deeds, which she did*; such practice made her capable of that favour, so great and extraordinary, the being restored to life; at least in St. Chrysostom's judgment: *The force of her alms*, saith he, *did conquer the tyranny of death*[f]. Cornelius also, that excellent person, who was, though a Gentile, so acceptable to God, and had so extraordinary graces conferred on him, is thus represented; *He was a devout man, and one that feared God, with all his house; who gave much alms to the people, and prayed to God alway.* We may add, that to be hospitable (one branch of these duties, and inferring the rest) is reckoned a qualification of those who are to be the guides and patterns of goodness unto others. And particularly, one fit to be promoted to a widow's office in the church is thus described; *Well reported of for good works; if she have brought up children; if she have lodged strangers; if she have washed the saints' feet; if she have relieved the afflicted; if she have diligently followed every good work.*

Job xxix. 12, 13, 15, 16.

Job xxx. 25.

Luke xix. 8, 9.

Acts ix. 36.

Acts x. 2.

1 Tim. iii. 2. Tit. i. 8.

1 Tim. v. 10.

6. So near to the heart of piety doth the holy

[f] Ἡ τῆς ἐλεημοσύνης δύναμις ἐτύγχανε θανάτου τὴν τυραννίδα. *Chrys. in Gen. Orat.* 55.

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Scripture lay the practice of these duties: and no wonder; for it often expressly declares charity to be the fulfilling of God's law, as the best expression of all our duty toward God, of faith in him, love and reverence of him, and as either formally containing, or naturally producing all our duty toward our neighbour. And of charity, works of bounty and mercy are both the chief instances, and the plainest signs: for whereas all charity doth consist either in mental desire, or in verbal signification, or in effectual performance of good to our neighbour; this last is the end, the completion, and the assurance of the rest. Good-will is indeed the root of charity; but that lies under ground, and out of sight; nor can we conclude its being or life without visible fruits of beneficence. Good words are at best but fair leaves thereof, such as may (and too often do) proceed from a weak and barren disposition of mind. But these *good works* are *real fruits*, (so St. Paul calls them; *Let ours also*, saith he, *learn to maintain good works for necessary uses, that they be not unfruitful,*) which declare a true life, and a good strength of charity in the bearer of them: by them τὸ γνήσιον τῆς ἀγάπης, *the sincerity* (or genuineness) *of our charity is proved.* For as no man ever doth impress a false stamp on the finest metal; so costly charity is seldom counterfeit. It is to decline spending their goods, or their pains, that men forge and feign; pretending to make up in wishing well, the defect of doing so, and paying words instead of things: but he that freely imparts what he hath, or can do for his neighbour's good, needs no other argument to evince that he loves in good earnest, nor can indeed well use any other: for words, if actions are wanting, seem abusive; and if actions are present, they are superfluous. Wherefore St. John thus advises; *My little children, let us not love in word, or in tongue,* (ἀλλ' ἔργῳ) *but in work and in truth.* To love in *work*, and to love in *truth*, he signifies to be the same thing; and to pretend

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Gal. v. 14. Rom. xiii. 9, 10. 1 Tim. i. 5. Matt. vii. 12.

Ἐπίτασις ἀγάπης ὁ ἔλεος. *Greg. Nyss. in Matt.* v. 7.

Tit. iii. 14. Rom. xv. 28. Phil. iv. 17.

2 Cor. viii. 8.

1 John iii. 18.

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love in ſpeech, without practiſing it in deed, he implies not allowable. And St. James in way of compariſon ſays, that as faith without works is dead, ſo love without beneficence is uſeleſs. For, *If a brother or ſiſter be naked, and deſtitute of daily food, and one of you ſay unto him, Depart in peace, be you warmed and filled, notwithſtanding ye give them not thoſe things which are needful to the body, what doth it profit? Even ſo faith without works is dead.* Cold wiſhes of good, working no real benefit to our neighbour, and a faint aſſent unto truth, producing no conſtant obedience to God, are things near of kin, and of like value; both of little worth or uſe. Charity then being the main point of religion, mercy and bounty being the chief parts of charity, well may theſe duties be placed in ſo high a rank, according to the divine heraldry of Scripture.

James ii. 15, 16, 17.

7. To enforce which obſervations, and that we may be farther certified about the weight and worth of theſe duties, we may conſider, that to the obſervance of them moſt ample and excellent rewards are aſſigned; that, in return for what we beſtow on our poor brethren, God hath promiſed all ſorts of the beſt mercies and bleſſings to us. The beſt of all good things, (that which in David's opinion was better than life itſelf) the fountain of all bleſſings, (God's love and favour, or mercy) is procured thereby, or is annexed to it. For, *God loveth a cheerful giver*, ſaith St. Paul; and, *The merciful ſhall obtain mercy*, ſaith our Saviour: and, *Mercy rejoiceth againſt judgment*, (or boaſteth, and triumpheth over it; ἵλεῳ καλαχαυχᾶται κρίσεως· that is, it appeaſeth God's wrath, and prevents our condemnation and puniſhment) ſaith St. James; God will not continue diſpleaſed with him, nor will withhold his mercy from him, who is kind and merciful to his neighbour. 'Tis true, if rightly underſtood, what the Hebrew Wiſe Man ſaith, *Water will quench a flaming fire, and alms maketh an atonement for ſins.* For this practice hath the nature and name of a ſacrifice,

Pſ. lxiii. 3.

2 Cor ix. 7.

Matth. v. 7.

James ii. 13.

Matth. vi. 14.

Ecclus. iii. 30.

Si nudum veſtias, te ipſum induis juſtitiam. *Ambr. Offic.* i. 11. *Hier. in Pſalm.* cxxxiii. *Chryſ.* tom. vi. Orat. 55.

and

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and is declared as ſuch both in excellency and efficacy to ſurpaſs all other ſacrifices; to be moſt acceptable to God, moſt available for expiation of guilt, moſt effectual in obtaining mercy and favour. Other ſacrifices performed in obedience to God's appointment (on virtue of our Lord's perfect obedience, and with regard to his pure ſacrifice of himſelf) did in their way propitiate God, and atone ſin: but this hath an intrinſic worth, and a natural aptitude to thoſe purpoſes. Other obligations did ſignify a willingneſs to render a due homage to God; this really and immediately performs it. They were ſhadows or images well reſembling that duty, (parting with any thing we have for the ſake of God, and for purchaſing his favour,) whereof this is the body and ſubſtance. This is therefore preferred as in itſelf excelling the reſt, and more eſtimable in God's ſight; ſo that in compariſon or competition therewith, the other ſeem to be ſlighted and rejected. *I will*, ſaith God, *have mercy, and not ſacrifice:* and, *Will the Lord be pleaſed with thouſands of rams, or with ten thouſands of rivers of oil?* Will he? that is, he will not be pleaſed with ſuch ſacrifices, if they be abſtracted from the more delightful ſacrifices of bounty and mercy. God never made an exception againſt theſe, or derogated from them in any caſe; they abſolutely and perpetually are, as St. Paul ſpeaketh, *Odours of a ſweet ſmell, ſacrifices acceptable and well-pleaſing to God.* And the Apoſtle to the Hebrews ſeconds him: *To do good*, ſaith he, *and to communicate, forget not; for with ſuch ſacrifices God is well pleaſed.* By theſe, all other works and all enjoyments are ſanctified; for, *Give alms*, ſaith our Lord, *of what ye have, and behold all things are pure unto you.* Such charitable perſons are therefore frequently pronounced bleſſed, that is, in effect inſtated in a confluence of all good things. *Bleſſed is he that conſidereth the poor*, ſays the Pſalmiſt; and, *He that hath a bountiful eye is bleſſed*, ſaith Solomon; and *He that hath mercy on the*

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Hoſ. vi. 6. Micah vi. 7.

Phil. iv. 18. Heb. xiii. 16. Luke xi. 41.

Pſal. xli. 1. Prov. xxii. 9. xiv. 21.

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SERM. XXII. *poor, happy is he,* ſaith the Wiſe Man again; and, *Bleſſed are the merciful,* ſaith our Lord himſelf. So in groſs and generally. Particularly alſo, and in retail, Matth. v. 7. the greateſt bleſſings are expreſsly allotted to this practice; proſperity in all our affairs is promiſed Deut. xv. 10. thereto. *Thou,* ſaith Moſes, *ſhalt ſurely give thy poor brother, and thine heart ſhall not be grieved that thou giveſt unto him; becauſe that for this thing the Lord thy God ſhall bleſs thee in all thy works, and in all that thou putteſt thine hand unto.* Stability in a good condition is ordinarily conſequent thereon: ſo the prophet Daniel implies, when adviſing king Nebu- Dan. iv. 27. chadnezzar to theſe works, he adds, *If it may be a lengthening of thy tranquillity.* Deliverance from evil incumbent, protection in imminent danger, and ſupport in afflictions, are the ſure rewards thereof: ſo Pſal. xli. 1. the Pſalmiſt aſſures us: *Bleſſed,* ſaith he, *is he that* 2, 3. *conſidereth the poor: the Lord will deliver him in time of trouble. The Lord will preſerve him and keep him alive, and he ſhall be bleſſed upon earth; and thou wilt not deliver him unto the will of his enemies. The Lord will ſtrengthen him upon the bed of languiſhing; thou wilt make all his bed in his ſickneſs.* Security from all want is likewiſe a recompence proper thereto: for, Prov. xxviii. 27. *He that giveth to the poor ſhall not lack,* ſaith the Iſa. lviii. 10, 11, 12. Wiſe Man. *If thou draw out thy ſoul to the hungry, and ſatisfy the afflicted ſoul, then ſhall thy light ariſe in obſcurity, &c.* Thriving in wealth and eſtate is an- Prov. xi. 25. other ſpecial reward: for, *The liberal ſoul ſhall be made fat;* the ſame author gives us his word for it. Even of the good things here below, to thoſe who for his Matt. xix. 29. ſake in this or any other way do *let go houſes or lands,* our Lord promiſeth the return of *a hundred-fold,* either in kind, or in value. So great encouragements are annexed to this practice even in relation to the concernments of this tranſitory life: but to them beſide God hath deſtinated rewards incomparably more conſiderable and precious, ſpiritual and eternal rewards, treaſures of heavenly wealth, crowns of

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of endleſs glory, the perfection of joy and bliſs to be diſpenſed *at the reſurrection of the juſt. He that for my ſake hath left houſes or lands, ſhall receive a hundred-fold now at this time*, (or in this preſent life) *and in the world to come ſhall inherit everlaſting life*; ſo infallible truth hath aſſured us. They who perform theſe duties are ſaid to *make themſelves bags which wax not old, a treaſure that faileth not in the heavens*; to *make themſelves friends of the unrighteous mammon, who, when they fail*, (when they depart, and leave their earthly wealth) *will receive them into everlaſting habitations*; to *lay up in ſtore for themſelves a good foundation againſt the time to come, that they may lay hold on eternal life.* Such rewards are promiſed to the obſervers. SERM. XXII. Luke xiv. 14. Matt. xix. 29. Mark x. 29, 30. Luke xii. 33. xvi. 9. 1 Tim. vi. 19.

8. And correſpondently grievous puniſhments are deſigned and denounced to the tranſgreſſors of theſe duties; the worſt of miſeries is their portion and doom: they, for being ſuch, do forfeit God's love and favour; they loſe his bleſſing and protection; they can have no ſure poſſeſſion, nor any comfortable enjoyment of their eſtate; for, *He*, ſaith St. James, *ſhall have judgment without mercy, who ſheweth no mercy.* And of ſuch a perſon it is ſaid in Job, *That which he laboureth for he ſhall reſtore, and ſhall not ſwallow it down: according to his ſubſtance ſhall the reſtitution be, and he ſhall not rejoice therein; becauſe he hath oppreſſed, and forſaken the poor.* (Not only becauſe he hath unjuſtly oppreſſed, but becauſe he hath uncharitably forſaken the poor.) If by the divine forbearance ſuch perſons do ſeem to enjoy a fair *portion in this life, (proſpering in the world and increaſing in riches)* they will find a ſad reckoning behind in the other world; this will be the reſult of that audit; *Woe be unto you, rich men, for ye have received your conſolation*; (ſuch rich men are meant, who have got, or kept, or uſed their wealth baſely; who have detained all the conſolation it yields to themſelves, and imparted none to others;) and, *Remember, ſon, thou didſt* James ii. 13. Job xx. 18, 19. Pſ. xvii. 14. lxxiii. 12. Luke vi. 24. Luke xvi. 25.

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SERM. XXII. *didſt receive thy good things in this life*; (ſo didſt receive them, as to ſwallow them, and ſpend them ——— here, without any proviſion or regard for the future in the uſe of them;) and, *Caſt that unprofitable ſervant* (who made no good uſe of his talent) *into utter darkneſs*. Such will be the fate of *every one that treaſures up to himſelf, and is not rich unto God*; not rich in piety and charity, not rich in performing for God's ſake works of bounty and mercy.

Matt. xxv. 30. Luke xii. 21.

9. It is indeed moſt conſiderable, that at the final reckoning, when all men's actions ſhall be ſtrictly ſcanned, and juſtly ſentenced according to their true deſert, a ſpecial regard will be had to the diſcharge or neglect of theſe duties. It is the bountiful and merciful perſons, who have relieved Chriſt in his poor members and brethren, who in that day will appear to be the ſheep at the right hand, and ſhall hear the good ſhepherd's voice uttering thoſe joyful words, *Come, ye bleſſed of my Father, enter into the kingdom prepared for you from the foundation of the world: For I was an hungered, and ye gave me meat; I was thirſty, and ye gave me drink; I was a ſtranger, and ye took me in; I was naked, and ye clothed me; I was ſick, and ye viſited me; I was in priſon, and ye came unto me.* He doth not ſay, becauſe you have made goodly profeſſions, becauſe you have been orthodox in your opinions, becauſe you have frequented religious exerciſes, (have prayed often and long, have kept many faſts, and heard many ſermons,) becauſe you have been ſtaunch in your converſations, becauſe you have been punctual in your dealings, becauſe you have maintained a ſpecious guiſe of piety, ſobriety, and juſtice; (although, indeed, he that will come off well at that great trial, muſt be reſponſible, and able to yield a good account in reſpect to all thoſe particulars;) but becauſe you have been charitably benign and helpful to perſons in need and diſtreſs, therefore bleſſed are you, therefore enter into the kingdom of glorious bliſs prepared for ſuch per-

Matt. xxv. 34, 35, 36.

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perſons. This proceeding more than intimates, that, in the judgment of our Lord, no ſort of virtue or good practice is to be preferred before that of charitable bounty; or rather that, in his eſteem, none is equal thereto: ſo that if the queſtion were put to him, which is one of them to Antiochus, (in Athanaſius's works) which is the moſt eminent virtue? our Lord would reſolve it no otherwiſe than is done by that father, affirming, that mercifulneſs is the queen of virtues; for that, at the final account, the examination chiefly proceeds upon that; it is made the ſpecial touchſtone of piety, and the peculiar ground of happineſs. On the other ſide, thoſe who have been deficient in theſe performances (uncharitable and unmerciful perſons) will at the laſt trial appear to be the wretched goats on the left hand, unto whom this uncomfortable ſpeech ſhall by the great Judge be pronounced; *Depart from me, ye curſed, into everlaſting fire, prepared for the devil and his angels: For I was hungry, and ye gave me no meat; I was thirſty, and ye gave me no drink; I was a ſtranger, and ye took me not in; naked, and ye clothed me not; ſick and in priſon, and ye viſited me not.* It is not, we may ſee, for having done that which in this world is called rapine or wrong, for having pillaged or cozened their neighbour, for having committed adultery or murder, or any other thing prohibited, that theſe unhappy men are ſaid to be formerly impeached, and finally condemned to that miſerable doom; but for having been unkind and unmerciful to their poor brethren [g]: this at that high tribunal will paſs for a moſt enormous crime, for the capital offence; for this it is that they ſhall be curſed, and caſt down into a wretched conſortſhip with thoſe malicious and mercileſs fiends, unto whoſe diſpoſition they did ſo nearly approach.

Athanaſius, tom. 2.

Mat. xxv. 41, 42, 43.

[g] Οὐκ ὅτι διηρπάκασιν, οὐδ' ὅτι σεσυλήκασιν, ἢ μεμοιχεύκασιν, ἢ ἄλλο τι τῶν ἀπηγορευμένων πεποιήκασιν, ταύτην τὴν τάξιν κατακριθέντες, ἀλλ' ὅτι μὴ Χριστὸν διὰ τῶν δεομένων τεθεραπεύκασιν. *Greg. Naz. Orat.* 16.

Thus.

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SERM. XXII. Thus it appears how mighty a ſtreſs God in the holy Scripture doth lay upon theſe duties, ſo peremptorily commanding them, ſo vehemently preſſing them, ſo highly commending them, ſo graciouſly by promiſes alluring us to the performance, ſo dreadfully by threatenings deterring us from the neglect of them. What an affront then will it be to God's authority, what a diſtruſt to his word, what a contempt of his power, his juſtice, his wiſdom, what a deſpite to his goodneſs and mercy, if, notwithſtanding all theſe declarations of his will and purpoſes, we ſhall preſume to be uncharitable in this kind! There are alſo conſiderations, (very many, very clear, and very ſtrong,) which diſcover the great reaſonableneſs and equity of theſe laws, with our indiſpenſable obligation to obey them; the which indeed with greater force do exact theſe duties from us, and do more earneſtly plead in the poor man's behalf, than he can beg or cry. If we either look up unto God, or down upon our poor neighbour, if we reflect upon ourſelves, or conſider our wealth itſelf, every where we may diſcern various reaſons obliging us, and various motives inducing us to the practice of theſe duties.

In regard to God.

II. Head of Diſcourſe. 1. We may conſider, that, by exerciſing of bounty and mercy, we are kind and courteous to God himſelf; by neglecting thoſe duties, we are unkind and rude to him: for that what of good or evil is by us done to the poor, God interprets and accepts as done to himſelf. The poor have a peculiar relation to God; he openly and frequently profeſſeth himſelf their eſpecial friend, patron, and protector; he is much concerned in, and particularly chargeth his providence with their ſupport. In effect therefore they ſhall ſurely be provided for, one way or other, *(The poor ſhall eat, and be ſatisfied: God will ſave the afflicted people: The Lord preſerveth the ſtrangers, he relieveth the fatherleſs and widow. When the poor and needy ſeek water, and there is none, and their tongue faileth for thirſt, I the Lord will hear them, I the God of Iſrael will not forſake them:)*

Pſ. xxii. 26. xviii. 27. cxlvi. 9. Iſa. xli. 17.

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them:) But out of goodneſs to us, he chooſeth, (if it may be, we freely concurring therein) and beſt liketh, that it ſhould be done by our hands; this conducing no leſs to our benefit, than to theirs; we thereby having opportunity to ſhew our reſpect to himſelf, and to lay an engagement on him to do us good. God therefore lendeth the poor man his own name, and alloweth him to crave our ſuccour for his ſake. (When the poor man aſketh us in God's name, or for God's ſake, he doth not uſurp or forge, he hath good authority, and a true ground for doing ſo:) God gives him credit from himſelf unto us for what he wants, and bids us charge what he receiveth on his own account; permitting us to reckon him obliged thereby, and to write him our debtor; engaging his own word and reputation duly to repay, fully to ſatisfy us. *He that hath pity on the poor, lendeth to the Lord; and that which he hath given, will he pay him again,* ſaith the Wiſe Man: and, *Inaſmuch as ye have done it to the leaſt of my brethren, ye have done it unto me,* ſaith our Saviour: and, *God is not unrighteous to forget your work and labour of love, which ye have ſhewed toward his name, in that ye have miniſtered to the ſaints, and do miniſter,* ſaith the Apoſtle. What therefore we give to the poor, God accepteth as an expreſſion of kindneſs to himſelf, being given to one of his friends and clients, in reſpect to him; he regards it as a teſtimony of friendly confidence in him, ſignifying that we have a good opinion of him, that we take him for able and willing to requite a good turn, that we dare take his word, and think our goods ſafe enough in his cuſtody. But if we ſtop our ears, or ſhut our hands from the poor, God interprets it as a harſh repulſe, and an heinous affront put upon himſelf: we doing it to one who bears his name, and wears his livery, (for the poor man's rags are badges of his relation unto God,) he thereby judges, that we have little good-will, little reſpect, little compaſſion toward himſelf: ſince we vouch-

Prov. xix. 17. Matt. xxv. 40. 45. Heb. vi. 10.

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safe not to grant him so mean a favour, since we refuse at his request, and (as it were) in his need, to accommodate him with a small sum, he justly reputes it as an argument of unkindly diffidence in him, that we have sorry thoughts of him, deeming him no good correspondent, little valuing his word, suspecting his goodness, his truth, or his sufficiency.

2. We by practising those duties are just, by omitting them are very unjust toward God. For our goods, our wealth, and our estate, are indeed none of them simply or properly our own, so that we have an absolute property in them, or an entire disposal of them: no, we are utterly incapable of such a right unto them, or power over them: God necessarily is the true and absolute proprietary of them. They are called the gifts of God: but we must not understand that God, by giving them to us, hath parted with his own right to them: they are deposited with us in trust, not alienated from him; they are committed to us as stewards, not transferred upon us as masters: they are so ours, that we have no authority to use them according to our will or fancy, but are obliged to manage them according to God's direction and order. He, by right immutable, is Lord paramount of all his creation; every thing unalienably belongs to him upon many accounts. He out of nothing made all things at first, and to every creature through each moment a new being is conferred by his preservative influence: originally therefore he is Lord of all things, and continually a new title of dominion over every thing springeth up unto him: it is his always, because he always maketh it. We ourselves are naturally mere slaves and vassals to him: as we can never be our own, (masters of ourselves, of our lives, of our liberties,) so cannot we ever properly be owners of any thing; there are no possible means, by which we can acquire any absolute title to the least mite; the principal right to what we seem to get, according to all law and reason, accrueth

Eccles. v. 19. vi. 2.

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crueth to our maſter. All things about us, by which we live, with which we work and trade, the earth which ſupports and feeds us, and furniſheth us with all commodities, the air we breathe, the ſun and ſtars which cheriſh our life, are all of them his, his productions and his poſſeſſions, ſubſiſting by his pleaſure, ſubject to his diſpoſal. How then can any thing be ours? How can we ſay, with the fooliſh churl Nabal, *Shall I take my bread, and my water, and my fleſh, and give it?* Thine? O inconſiderate man! How cameſt thou by it? How doſt thou hold it? Didſt thou make it? or doſt thou preſerve it? Canſt thou claim any thing by nature? No; thou broughteſt nothing with thee into the world; thou didſt not bring thyſelf hither[h]. Canſt thou challenge any thing to thyſelf from chance? No, for there is no ſuch thing as chance, all things being guided and governed by God's providence. Doſt thou conceive thy induſtry can entitle thee to any thing? Thou art miſtaken; for all the wit and ſtrength thou applieſt, the head thou contriveſt with, and the hands thou workeſt with, are God's; all the ſucceſs thou findeſt did wholly depend on him, was altogether derived from him; all thy projects were vain, all thy labours would be fruitleſs, did not he aſſiſt and bleſs thee. Thou doſt vainly and falſely *lift up thine heart, and forget the Lord thy God, whenas thy herds and flocks multiply, and thy ſilver and gold is multiplied, and all that thou haſt is multiplied; if thou ſayeſt in thy heart, My power and the might of my hand hath gotten me this wealth. But thou muſt remember the Lord thy God, for it is he that giveth thee power to get wealth.* [——*Who am I*, ſaith David, *and what is my people, that we ſhould be able to offer ſo willingly after this ſort? For all things come of thee; and of thine own have we*

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Pſ. xxiv. 1. l. 12. lxxxix. 11. xcv. 5.

1 Sam. xxv. 11.

Deut. viii. 13, 14, 17, 18.

[h] Sed ais, Quid injuſtum eſt, ſi cum aliena non invadam, propria diligentius ſervem? O impudens dictum! propria dicis? quæ? ex quibus reconditis in hunc mundum detuliſti? *Ambroſ.*

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given thee. 1 Chron. xxix. 14.] Since then upon all ſcores every thing we have doth appertain to God, he may without any injury recal or reſume whatever he pleaſeth; and while he letteth any thing abide with us, we cannot juſtly uſe it otherwiſe than he hath appointed, we cannot duly apply it otherwiſe than to his intereſt and ſervice [i]. God then having enjoined, that after we have ſatisfied our neceſſities, and ſupplied our reaſonable occaſions, we ſhould employ the reſt to the relief of our poor neighbours; that *if we have two coats*, (one more than we need) *we ſhould impart one to him that hath none*; *if we have meat* abundant, that we *likewiſe* communicate to him that wants it [k]: God, by the poor man's voice, (or by his need and miſery) demanding his own from us, we are very unjuſt if we preſume to withhold it; doubly unjuſt we are, both toward God, and toward our neighbour: we are unfaithful ſtewards, miſapplying the goods of our Maſter, and croſſing his order [l]: we are wrongful uſurpers, detaining from our neighbour that which God hath allotted him; we are in the court of conſcience; we ſhall appear at the bar of God's judgment no better than robbers, (under vizards of legal right and poſſeſſion) ſpoiling our poor brother of his goods; his, I ſay, by the very ſame title as any thing can be ours, by the free donation of God, fully and frequently expreſſed, as we have ſeen in his holy word. (He cannot take it away by violence or ſurreption againſt our will, but we are bound willingly to yield

Luke iii. 11.

[i] Aliena rapere convincitur, qui ultra neceſſaria ſibi retinere probatur. *Hieron.*

[k] Quicquid Deus pluſquam opus eſt dederit, non nobis ſpecialiter dedit, ſed per nos aliis erogandum tranſmiſit; quod ſi non dederimus, res alienas invaſimus. *Aug. Serm.* 219. *de Temp.*

Proprium nemo dicat quod commune; plus quam ſufficeret ſumptui violenter obtentum eſt. *Ambroſ.*

[l] Σὺ δὲ οὐκ ἀποσερητὴς, ἃ πρὸς οἰκονομίαν ἐδέξω, ταῦτα ἴδια σαυτῷ ποιεῖν; *Baſ. M.*

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it up to him; to do that, were diſorder in him; to refuſe this, is wrong in us.) 'Tis the hungry man's bread which we hoard up in our barns, 'tis his meat on which we glut, and his drink which we guzzle [m]: 'tis the naked man's apparel which we ſhut up in our preſſes, or which we exorbitantly ruffle and flaunt in: 'tis the needy perſon's gold and ſilver which we cloſely hide in our cheſts, or ſpend idly, or put out to uſeleſs uſe. We are in thus holding, or thus ſpending, truly πλεονέκται, not only covetous, but wrongful, or havers of more than our own, againſt the will of the right owners; plainly violating that precept of Solomon; *Withhold not good from them to whom it is due, when it is in the power of thy hand to do it.* If we are ambitious of having a property in ſomewhat, or affect to call any thing our own, 'tis only by nobly giving that we can accompliſh our deſire; that will certainly appropriate our goods to our uſe and benefit: but from baſely keeping, or vainly embezzling them, they become not our poſſeſſion and enjoyment, but our theft and our bane [n]. (Theſe things, ſpoken after the holy fathers, wiſe inſtructors in matters of piety, are to be underſtood with reaſonable temperament, and practiſed with honeſt prudence. I cannot ſtand to diſcuſs caſes, and remove ſcruples; a pious charity will eaſily diſcern its due limits and meaſures, both declining perplexity, and not evading duty. The ſum is, that juſtice towards God and man obligeth us, not to ſuffer our poor brother to periſh, or pine away for want, when we ſurfeit and ſwim in plenty, or not to ſee him lack neceſſaries, when we are well able to relieve him.)

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Prov. iii. 27.

3. Shewing bounty and mercy are the moſt pro-

[m] Noſtrum eſt (pauperes clamant) quod effunditis; nobis crudeliter ſubtrahitur, quod inaniter expenditur. *Bern. Ep.* 42.

[n] Omne quod male poſſidetur alienum eſt; male autem poſſidet, qui male utitur. *Auguſt. Ep.* 54.

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per and the principal expreſſions of our gratitude unto God; ſo that in omitting them, we are not only very unjuſt, but highly ingrateful. Innumerable are the benefits, favours, and mercies, (both common and private) which God hath beſtowed on us, and doth continually beſtow: he inceſſantly ſhowers down bleſſings on our heads; he *daily loadeth us with his benefits*; he perpetually *crowneth us with loving-kindneſs and tender mercies*: all that we are, all that we have, all that we can hope for of good, is alone from his free bounty: our beings and lives, with all the conveniences and comforts of them, we entirely owe to him as to our Maker, our Preſerver, our conſtant Benefactor: all the excellent privileges we enjoy, and all the glorious hopes we have as Chriſtians, we alſo ſtand indebted for purely to his undeſerved mercy and grace. And, *What ſhall we render unto the Lord for all his benefits toward us?* Shall we render him nothing? Shall we refuſe him any thing? Shall we boggle at making returns ſo inconſiderable, in regard to what he hath done for us? What is a little gold, or ſilver, or braſs perhaps, which our poor neighbour craveth of us, in compariſon to our life, our health, our reaſon; to all accommodations of our body, and all endowments of our mind? What are all the goods in the world to the love and favour of God, to the pardon of our ſins, to the gifts of God's Spirit, to the dignity of being the children of God, and heirs of ſalvation; to the being freed from extreme miſeries, and made capable of eternal felicity? And doth not this unexpreſſible goodneſs, do not all theſe ineſtimable benefits require ſome correſpondent thankfulneſs? Are we not obliged, ſhall we not be willing to exhibit ſome real teſtimony thereof? And what other can we exhibit beſide this? We cannot directly or immediately requite God, for he cannot ſo receive any thing from us; he is not capable of being himſelf enriched or exalted, of being any wiſe pleaſured or bet-

Pſ. lxviii. 19. ciii. 4.

Pſ. cxvi. 12.

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bettered by us, who is in himſelf infinitely ſufficient, glorious, joyful, and happy: *Our goodneſs extends not to him; a man cannot be profitable to his Maker.* All that we can do in this kind is thus indirectly, in the perſons of his poor relations, to gratify him, imparting at his deſire, and for his ſake, ſomewhat of what he hath beſtowed on us upon them. Such a thankful return we owe unto God, not only for what he hath given us, but even for the capacity of giving to others; for that we are in the number of thoſe who can afford relief, and who need not to demand it. Our very wealth and proſperous ſtate ſhould not ſeem to us ſo contemptible things, that we ſhould be unwilling to render ſomewhat back in grateful reſentment for them: the very act of giving is itſelf no mean benefit; (having ſo much of honour in it, ſo much of pleaſure going with it, ſo much of reward following it;) we receive far more than we return in giving; for which therefore it is fit that we ſhould return our gratitude, and conſequently that we ſhould perform theſe duties [o]. For indeed without this practice, no other expreſſion of gratitude can be true in itſelf, or can be acceptable to God. We may ſeem abundantly to thank him in words; but a ſparing hand gives the lie to the fulleſt mouth: we may ſpare our breath, if we keep back our ſubſtance: for all our praiſing God for his goodneſs, and bleſſing him with our lips, if we will do nothing for him, if we will not part with any thing for his

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Pſ. xvi. 2. Job xxii. 2.

[o] Δός τι θεῷ χαριστήριον, ὅτι τῶν εὖ ποιεῖν δυναμένων ἐγένου, ἀλλ' ὲ τῶν εὖ πάσχειν διομένων. *Naz.*

—τὸν φιλάνθρωπον ὑμνῆσαι δεσπότην, ὅτι τοῖς ἀλλοτρίοις ἡμᾶς σωφρονίζει παθήμασι, καὶ οὐχ ἡμᾶς εἰς ἑτέρων παρέπεμψεν οἰκίας, ἀλλ' εἰς τὰς ἡμετέρας ἄλλως ἤγαγε θύρας. *Theod. Ep.* 30.

Εἰ δὲ μὴ νομίζεις λαμβάνειν μᾶλλον, ἢ δίδόναι, μὴ παράσχῃς. *Chryſoſt.* tom. v. *Orat.* 54.

Nec enim homo Deo præſtat beneficium in his quæ dederit, ſed Deus his homini quæ acceperit. *Salvian.*

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SERM. XXII. sake, appears mere compliment, is, in truth, plain mockery, and vile hypocrisy.

4. Yea, which we may farther consider, all our devotion severed from a disposition of practising these duties, is no less such; cannot have any true worth in it, shall not yield any good effect from it. Our prayers, if we are uncharitably disposed, what are they other than demonstrations of egregious impudence and folly? For how can we with any face presume to ask any thing from God, when we deny him requesting a small matter from us? How can we with any reason expect any mercy from him, when we vouchsafe not to shew any mercy for his sake? Can we imagine that God will hearken unto, or mind our petitions, when we are deaf to his entreaties, and regardless of his desires? No; *Whoso stoppeth his ears at the cry of the poor, he also shall cry himself, but shall not be heard.* 'Tis his declaration to such bold and unreasonable petitioners, *When you spread forth your hands, I will not hear you; when you make many prayers, I will not hear.* No importunity, no frequency of prayers will move God in such a case; the needy man's cries and complaints will drown their noise; his sighs and groans will obstruct their passage, and stop the ears of God against them. Likewise all our semblances of repentance, all our corporal abstinences and austerities, if a kind and merciful disposition are wanting, what are they truly but presumptuous dallyings, or impertinent triflings with God? For do we not grossly collude with sin, when we restrain the sensual appetites of the body, but foment the soul's more unreasonable desires? when we curb our wanton flesh, and give licence to a base spirit? Do we not palpably baffle, when in respect to God we pretend to deny ourselves, yet upon urgent occasion allow him nothing? Do we not strangely prevaricate, when we would seem to appease God's anger, and purchase his favour by our sub-

Prov. xxi. 13.

Isa. i. 15.

Jam. v. 4. Ecclus. iv. 4, 5, 6.

Τί δὲ κέρδος, σωφρονεῖν μετὰ ἀνανδρίας; &c. *Chrys.* tom. v. Or. 55.

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ſubmiſſions, yet refuſe to do that which he declares moſt pleaſing to him, and moſt neceſſary to thoſe purpoſes? It is an ordinary thing for men thus to ſerve God, and thus to delude themſelves: *I have known many*, ſaith St. Baſil, *who have faſted, and prayed, and groaned, and expreſſed all kind of coſtleſs piety, who yet would not part with one doit to the afflicted* P. Such a cheap and eaſy piety, which coſts us little or nothing, can ſurely not be worth much; and we muſt not conceit, that the all-wiſe God (*the God of knowledge, by whom actions are weighed*, as Anna ſang, and who *weighed the ſpirits* alſo, as the Wiſe Man ſaith) will be cheated therewith, or take it for more than its juſt value. No; he hath expreſsly ſignified, that he hath *not choſen* ſuch ſervices, nor doth take any pleaſure in them: he hath called them *vain and impertinent oblations*; not *ſweet* or *acceptable, but abominable* and *troubleſome* to him, ſuch as he *cannot away with*, and *is weary to bear*. 'Tis *religious liberality* that doth prove us to be ſerious and earneſt in other *religious performances*; which aſſures that we value matters of piety at a conſiderable rate; which gives a ſubſtance and ſolidity to our devotions; which ſanctifies our faſts, and verifies our penances; which renders our praiſes real, and our prayers effectual; ſo that theſe being combined, we may reaſonably expect acceptance and recompence; and in effect to hear that from God, which by him was returned to good Cornelius, *Thy prayers and thine alms are come up for a memorial before God.*

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2 Sam. xxiv. 24. 1 Sam. ii. 3. Prov. xvi. 2. Iſa. lviii. 5. i. 13, 14. Mic. vi. 6, 7. Jer. vi. 20. Acts x. 4.

5. The conſcionable practice of theſe duties doth plainly ſpring from thoſe good diſpoſitions of mind regarding God, which are the original grounds and fountains of all true piety; and the neglect of them iſſueth from thoſe vicious diſpoſitions which have a

P Οἶδα πολλὺς νηστεύοντας, προσευχομένους, κεκράζοντας, πᾶσαν τὴν ἀδάπανον εὐλάβειαν ἐπιδεικνυμένους, ὁδοὸν ἓν ἵνα μὴ προϊέμενος τοῖς θλιβομένοις. *Baſ. M. in Luc.* xii. 8.

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peculiar inconſiſtency with piety, being deſtructive thereof in the very foundation and root. Faith in God is the fundamental grace upon which piety is grounded; love and fear of God are the radical principles from which it grows: all which as the charitable man diſcovers in his practice, ſo they are apparently baniſhed from the heart of the illiberal and unmerciful perſon.

As for faith, the good man, in ſhewing bounty, exerciſeth the chief act thereof; he freely parteth with his goods, becauſe he truſteth on God's providence more than them, and believeth God more ready to help him, than any creature can do, in his need: becauſe he is perſuaded that God is moſt good and benign, ſo as never to ſuffer him to be oppreſſed with want; becauſe he taketh God to be juſt and faithful, who, having charged him *to care for nothing*, but *to caſt his care and burden upon the Lord*, having promiſed to *care for him*, to *ſuſtain him*, *never* to *leave or forſake him*, having alſo engaged himſelf to repay and recompence him for what he giveth to his poor neighbour, will not fail to make good his word: becauſe he thinks God abundantly ſolvent, and himſelf never the poorer for laying out in his behalf; becauſe, in ſhort, he is content to live in a dependence upon God, and at his diſpoſal. It is mentioned by the Apoſtle to the Hebrews, as a ſpecial inſtance of a reſolute and conſtant faith in the firſt Chriſtians, that *they took joyfully the ſpoiling of their goods, knowing in themſelves, that they had in heaven a better and an enduring ſubſtance.* He that not forcibly by the violent rapacity of others, but voluntarily by his own free reſignation for the ſervice of God, delivereth them up with the ſame alacrity, opinion, and hope, thereby demonſtrates the ſame faith. But the *gripple wretch*, who will beſtow nothing on his poor brother for God's ſake, is evidently an infidel, having none at all, or very heatheniſh conceits of God. He muſt be either a mere Atheiſt, diſbelieving

Matt. vi. 25. Phil. iv. 6. 1 Pet. v. 7. Pſ. lv. 22. Heb. xiii. 5.

Heb. x. 34.

lieving the existence of God; or an Epicurean, in his heart denying God's providence over human affairs; (for did he conceive God to have any regard unto, or any influence over what passes here, how could he be afraid of wanting upon this score[q]? how could he repose any confidence in these possessions? how could he think himself secure in such a neglect or defiance of God?) or he must be exceedingly profane, entertaining most dishonourable and injurious apprehensions of God. He cannot but imagine God very unkind, not only in neglecting men that want his help, but in making them to suffer for spending upon his account; very unjust, in not repaying what he borrows; very unfaithful, in breaking his word; very deceitful, in gulling us of our things by fair promises of restitution and requital: or he must apprehend God forgetful of what we do, and himself says; or that he is needy and impotent, not having wherewith to make satisfaction, not being able to make good what he pretends. He must in his conceit debase God even beneath the vilest creatures, thinking a senseless lump of clay more apt in his need to help him, than God can be with all his power and care; supposing his money safer in his own coffers than in God's hands, and that iron bars will guard it more surely than divine protection; esteeming his neighbour's bond for much better security than God's word, and that a mortal man is far more able or more true than the eternal God. He certainly cannot think one word true that God says, being loth to trust him for a penny, for a piece of bread, or for an old garment. All God's promises of recompence, and threatenings of punishment, he takes for idle fictions: heaven and hell are but Utopia's in his conceit; the joys of one, offered to the charitable person, are but pleasant fancies; SERM. XXII.

[q] Ὁ γὰρ τοιοῦτος ἐν τῷ θεῷ ἀπιστήσειεν, ἀλλὰ τῷ ἑαυτοῦ χρυσίῳ, θεὸν τοῦτο ἡγούμενος, καὶ ἐπ' αὐτῷ ἀποιθώς. *Const. Apost.* iv. 4.

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SERM. XXII. the torments of the other, denounced to the uncharitable, but fearful dreams. All other things are but names; money and lands are the only real things unto him: all the happineſs he can conceive or wiſh is contained in bags and barns; theſe are the ſole points of his faith, and objects of his confidence. *He makes gold his hope, and ſaith to the fine gold, Thou art my confidence. He rejoices becauſe his wealth is great, and becauſe his hand hath gotten much*, as Job ſpeaketh, diſclaiming that practice in himſelf, and tacitly charging it on the perſons we ſpeak of. He doth, in fine, affect a total independency upon God, and cares to have no dealing with him; he would truſt to himſelf, and live on his own eſtate: ſo groſs infidelity, and horrible profaneneſs of mind, lie couched under this ſort of vices.

Hab. ii. 9.

Job xxxi. 24, 25.

As for the love of God, the liberal man declares it, in that for God's ſake he is willing to part with any thing, that he values God's love and favour above all other goods; that he deems himſelf rich and happy enough in the enjoyment of God. But, *Who hath this world's goods, and ſeeth his brother have need, and ſhutteth up his bowels from him, how dwelleth the love of God in him?* ſaith St. John: that is, it is impoſſible he ſhould love God; 'tis a vain conceit to think he does; 'tis a frivolous thing for him to pretend it. For how poſſibly can he bear in his heart any affection to God, who will not for his ſake, and at his inſtance, part with a little worthleſs traſh, and dirty pelf? who prizes ſo inconſiderable matters beyond God's favour and friendſhip? who prefers the keeping of his wealth before the enjoyment of God; and chooſes rather certainly to quit his whole intereſt in God, than to adventure a ſmall parcel of his eſtate with God? His practice indeed ſufficiently diſcovers, that his hard and ſtupid heart is uncapable of any love, except of a corrupt, inordinate, and fond love, or dotage toward himſelf, ſince ſo preſent and ſenſible objects cannot affect him.

1 John iii. 17.

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him. *He that loveth not his brother, whom he hath seen, how can he love God, whom he hath not seen*[a]? SERM. XXII.

And as to the fear and reverence of God, the liberal man expreſſes it in ſubmiſſion to God's commands, although with his own preſent ſeeming diminution and loſs; in preferring the diſcharging of his conſcience before the retaining his money; in caſting overboard his temporal goods, that he may ſecure his ſpiritual and eternal concernments. He can ſay (his practice atteſting to his profeſſion) with David, *I love thy commandments above gold:* and, *The law of thy mouth is dearer to me than thouſands of gold and ſilver:* he ſhews that he is *a man of truth, fearing God, and hating covetouſneſs*; which diſpoſitions, as having much affinity and connection, are well joined together by Jethro. But the uncharitable man can have little fear of God before his eyes; ſince the commands of God have no efficacy on his conſcience; ſince he dreads not the effects of divine power and juſtice, provoked by his diſobedience; ſince he deems an imaginary danger of want from giving, worſe than a certain commiſſion of ſin in withholding; and is more afraid of penury here, than of damnation hereafter.

[a] 1 John iv. 20.

Pſ. cxix. 127.

Exod. xviii. 21.

The truth is, the covetous or illiberal man is therefore uncapable of being truly pious, becauſe his heart is poſſeſſed with vain devotion toward ſomewhat beſide God, which in effect is his ſole divinity; he is juſtly ſtyled an idolater, for that he directs and employs the chief affections of his mind upon an idol of clay, which he loves with all his heart, and all his ſoul, which he entirely confides in, which he eſteems and worſhips above all things. It is Mammon, which of all the competitors and antagoniſts of God, invading God's right, and uſurping his place, is (as our Lord intimates) the moſt dangerous, and deſperately repugnant: where he becomes predominant, true religion is quite excluded; *Ye cannot ſerve God and Mammon.* Other vicious inclinations combat

Col. iii. 5. Eph. v. 5.

Matt. vi. 24.

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SERM. XXII. reaſon, and often baffle it, but ſeldom ſo vanquiſh it, as that a man doth approve or applaud himſelf in his miſcarriages: but the covetous humour ſeizeth on our reaſon itſelf, and ſeateth itſelf therein; inducing it to favour and countenance what is done amiſs. The voluptuous man is ſwayed by the violence of his appetite; but the covetous is ſeduced by the dictate of his judgment: he therefore ſcrapes and hoards, and lets go nothing, becauſe he eſteems wealth the beſt thing in the world, and then judges himſelf moſt wiſe, when he is moſt baſe. *Labour not to be rich; ceaſe from thine own wiſdom*, ſaith Solomon; intimating the judgment ſuch perſons are wont to make of their riches: whence, of all diſpoſitions oppoſite to piety, this is the moſt pernicious. But farther,

Prov. xxiii. 4.

6. Let us conſider, that nothing is more conformable to God's nature, or renders us more like to him, than beneficence and mercy; and that conſequently nothing can be more grateful to him: that nothing is more diſagreeable and contrary to the eſſential diſpoſition of God, than illiberality and unmercifulneſs; and therefore that nothing can be more diſtaſteful to him. What is any being in the world, but an efflux of his bounty, and an argument of his liberality? Look every where about nature, conſider the whole tenour of providence, ſurvey all the works, and ſcan all the actions of God, you will find them all conſpiring in atteſtation to thoſe ſweet characters and elogies which the holy Scripture aſcribeth to God, repreſenting him to be *merciful and gracious, long-ſuffering, and abundant in goodneſs*; to be *ſorry for evil*, (incident to, or inflicted upon, any creature) to *delight in mercy*, to *wait that he may be gracious*; ſtyling him the *God of love, of peace, of hope, of patience, of all grace, and of all conſolation, the Father of pities, rich in mercy, and full of bowels*; affirming of him, and by manifold evidences demonſtrating, that he is *benign even unto the ingrateful and evil*;

Exod. xxxiv. 6. Joel ii. 13. Mic. vii. 18. Iſa. xxx. 18. Rom. xv. 5. 15. 33. Eph. ii. 4. 2 Cor. xiii. 11. i. 3. Jam. v. 11. 1 Pet. v. 10.

Luke vi. 35.

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evil; that *he is good to all, and his tender mercies are over all his works.* Nature, I say, Providence, and Revelation, do all concur in testifying this, that there is nothing in God so peculiarly admirable, nothing, as it were, so godlike, that is, so highly venerable and amiable, as to do good and shew mercy[r]. We therefore by liberal communication to the needy do most approach to the nature of God, and most exactly imitate his practice; acquiring to ourselves thereby somewhat of divinity, and becoming little gods to our neighbour. *Nothing*, saith St. Chrysostom, *maketh us so near equal to God as beneficence*[s]: and, *Be*, saith St. Gregory Nazianzen, *a God to the unfortunate, imitating the mercy of God; for a man hath nothing of God so much as to do good*[t]. That such hath always been the common apprehension of men, the practice of all times sheweth, in that men have been ever apt to place their benefactors among their gods, deferring that love and veneration unto them in degree, which in perfection do appertain to the supreme Benefactor[u]. *Be merciful, as your heavenly Father is merciful*; so our Saviour proposeth God's mercy to us, both as a pattern directing, and as an argument inducing us to mercifulness: implying it also to be a good sign, declaring us the children of God, the genuine offspring of the all-good and all-merciful Father; yea, that it even renders and constitutes us such, (we thereby coming most truly to

Ps. cxlv. 9.

Deus est mortali, juvare mortalem. *Plin. N. H.* l. ii.

Luke vi. 35, 36.

[r] Θεῦ πολλῶν ὄντων ἐφ' οἷς θαυμάζεται, ὐδὲν ἔτως ὡς τὸ φιλᾶς εὐεργετεῖν ἰδιώταλον. *Naz. Orat.* 26.

[s] Οὐδὲν γὰρ ἡμᾶς ἴσους θεῷ ποιεῖ, ὡς τὸ εὐεργετεῖν. *Chrys. in Matt. Orat.* 35.

[t] Γίνυ τῷ ἀτυχοῦντι θεὸς, τὸν ἔλεον τοῦ θεοῦ μιμησάμενος· ὐδὲν γὰρ ἔτως ὡς τὸ εὖ ποιεῖν ἄνθρωπος ἔχει θεῦ. *Naz. Or.* 16.

[u] Hic est vetustissimus referendi bene merentibus gratiam mos, ut tales numinibus adscribantur. *Plin.* ii. 7.

Suscepit vita hominum, consuetudoque communis, ut beneficiis excellentes viros in cœlum fama ac voluntate tollerent. *Cic. de N. D.* 2.

repre-

SERM. XXII. represent, and most nearly to resemble him.) Our Lord farther teaches us, saying, *Love your enemies, bless them that curse you, do good to those that hate you* —— *that ye may be the sons of your Father which is in heaven.* And they who thus are God's children must consequently be very dear to him, and most gracious in his sight; he cannot but greatly like and love himself (the best of himself) in them; he cannot but cherish and treat them well, who are the fairest and truest images of himself; no spectacle can be so pleasant to him, as to see us in our practice to act himself, doing good to one another; *as the elect of God, holy and beloved, putting on bowels of mercies and kindness, humbleness of mind, meekness, long-suffering; forbearing one another, and forgiving one another, even as Christ forgave us*; being *followers of God as dear children, and walking in love, even as Christ also loved us.* But on the other side, there is not in nature any thing so remotely distant from God, or so extremely opposite to him, as a greedy and griping niggard: hell is scarce so contrary to heaven, as such a man's disposition to the nature of God: for 'tis *goodness* which sits gloriously triumphant at the top of heaven; and *uncharitableness* lieth miserably grovelling under the bottom of hell: heaven descends from the one, as its principal cause; hell is built on the other, as its main foundation; as the one approximates the blessed angels to God, and beatifies them; so the other removeth the cursed fiends to such a distance from God and happiness: not to wish, not to do any good, is that which renders them both so bad, and so wretched; and whoever in his conditions is so like to them, and in his practice so agrees with them, cannot but also be very odious to God, and extremely unhappy. God cannot but abhor so base a degeneration from his likeness in those who by nature are his children, and should be farther such according to his gracious design; neither can any thing more offend his eyes, than

Matt. v. 44, 45.

Col. iii. 12, 13.

Eph. v. 1, 2.

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than ſeeing them to uſe one another unkindly. So that if obtaining the certain favour of the great God, with all the benefits attending it, ſeem conſiderable to us; or if we think it adviſable to ſhun his diſpleaſure, with its ſad effects; it concerns us to practiſe theſe duties. So I conclude that ſort of conſiderations, enforcing theſe duties, which more immediately regard God. SERM. XXII.

Farther, before we deny our relief to our poor neighbour, let us with the eyes of our mind look on him, and attentively conſider who he is, what he is in himſelf, and what he is in relation unto us. [*The righteous conſidereth the cauſe of the poor; but the wicked regardeth not to know it.* Prov. xxix. 7. *Bleſſed is he that conſidereth the poor.* Pſal. xli. 1.] III. Head of Diſcourſe.

1. He whoſe need craves our bounty, whoſe miſery demands our mercy, what is he? He is not truly ſo mean and ſorry a thing, as the diſguiſe of misfortune, under which he appears, doth repreſent him. He who looks ſo deformedly and diſmally, who to outward ſight is ſo ill beſtead, and ſo pitifully accoutred, hath latent in him much of admirable beauty and glory. He within himſelf containeth a nature very excellent; an immortal ſoul, and an intelligent mind, by which he nearly reſembleth God himſelf, and is comparable to angels: he inviſibly is owner of endowments, rendering him capable of the greateſt and beſt things. What are money and lands? What are ſilk and fine linen? What are horſes and hounds, in compariſon to reaſon, to wiſdom, to virtue, to religion, which he hath, or (in deſpite of all misfortune) he may have if he pleaſe? He whom you behold ſo dejectedly ſneaking, in ſo deſpicable a garb, ſo deſtitute of all convenience and comfort, (lying in the duſt, naked, or clad with rags, meagre with hunger or pain) he comes of a moſt high and heavenly extraction: he was born a prince, the ſon of the greateſt King eternal; he can truly call the ſovereign Lord of all the world his father, having

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SERM. XXII. having derived his ſoul from the mouth, having had his body formed by the hands of God himſelf. (In this, ——— *The rich and poor*, as the Wiſe Man ſaith, *do meet together*; *the Lord is the maker of them all.*) That ſame forlorn wretch, whom we are ſo apt to deſpiſe and trample upon, was framed and conſtituted lord of the viſible world; had all the goodly brightneſſes of heaven, and all the coſtly furnitures of earth created to ſerve him. (*Thou madeſt him*, ſaith the Pſalmiſt of man, *to have dominion over the works of thine hands*; *thou haſt put all things under his feet.*) Yea, he was made an inhabitant of paradiſe, and poſſeſſor of felicities ſuperlative; had immortal life and endleſs joy in his hand, did enjoy the entire favour and friendſhip of the moſt High. Such in worth of nature and nobleneſs of birth he is, as a man: and highly more conſiderable he is, as a Chriſtian. For, as vile and contemptible as he looks, God hath ſo regarded and prized him, as for his ſake to deſcend from heaven, to clothe himſelf with fleſh, to aſſume the form of a ſervant; for his good to undertake and undergo the greateſt inconveniences, infirmities, wants, and diſgraces, the moſt grievous troubles and moſt ſharp pains incident to mortal nature. God hath adopted him to be his child; the Son of God hath deigned to call him brother: he is a member of Chriſt, a temple of the Holy Ghoſt, a free denizen of the heavenly city, an heir of ſalvation, and candidate of eternal glory. The greateſt and richeſt perſonage is not capable of better privileges than God hath granted him, or of higher preferments than God hath deſigned him to. He equally with the mightieſt prince is the object of God's eſpecial providence and grace, of his continual regard and care, of his fatherly love and affection; *Who*, as good Elihu ſaith, *accepteth not the perſons of princes, nor regardeth the rich more than the poor*; *for they are all the work of his hands.* In fine, this poor creature whom thou ſeeſt is a man, and a Chriſtian,

Prov. xxii. 2.

Gen. i. 28.

Pſ. viii. 6.

Job xxxiv. 19.

thine

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thine equal, whoever thou art, in nature, and thy peer in condition: I say not, in the uncertain and unstable gifts of fortune, not in this worldly state, which is very inconsiderable; but in gifts vastly more precious, in title to an estate infinitely more rich and excellent [x]. Yea, if thou art vain and proud, be sober and humble; he is thy better, in true dignity much to be preferred before thee, far in real wealth surpassing thee: *Better is the poor that walketh in his uprightness, than he that is perverse in his ways, though he be rich.* Eccles. x. 24. Prov. xxviii. 6.

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2. That distinction which thou standest upon, and which seemeth so vast between thy poor neighbour and thee, what is it? whence did it come? whither tends it? It is not any wise natural, or according to primitive design: for as all men are in faculties and endowments of nature equal, so were they all originally equal in condition, all wealthy and happy, all constituted in a most prosperous and plentiful estate; all things at first were promiscuously exposed to the use and enjoyment of all, every one from the common stock assuming as his own what he needed. Inequality and private interest in things (together with sicknesses and pains, together with all other infelicities and inconveniences) were the by-blows of our fall [y]: sin introduced these degrees and distances; it devised the names of rich and poor; it begot these ingrossings and inclosures of things; it forged those two small pestilent words, *meum* and *tuum*, which have engendered so much strife among

[x] ——ἐννόησον, ὅτι ὁμοίως σοι ἐλεύθερός ἐστι, καὶ τῆς αὐτῆς σοι κοινωνεῖ εὐγενείας, καὶ πάντα σοι κοινὰ κέκτηλαι. *Chrys. in Heb. Orat.* 2.

Οἱ τοίνυν ἐν τοῖς πνευματικοῖς τοσαύτην ἔχοντες ἰσοτιμίαν, πόθεν μίγα φρονεῖτε; ὅτι ὁ δεῖνα πλούσιος, καὶ ὁ δεῖνα ἰσχυρός; *Chrys. in Eph.* iv. 4. *in Job. Orat.* 15.

Ἡ δὲ πνεύματος χάρις ὁμοτίμους ποιεῖ τοὺς ὁμοφρονας. *Naz. Or.* 23.

[y] Πενία καὶ πλοῦτος, ἐλευθερία τε, ἣν φαμὲν, καὶ δουλεία, καὶ τὰ τοιαῦτα τῶν ὀνομάτων, ὕστερον ἐπεισῆλθον τῷ γένει τῶν ἀνθρώπων, ὥσπερ αἱρέσεις καὶ τῇ κακίᾳ συνεισπίσοντα, καὶ κείμενα ἐπινοήματα. *Greg. Naz. Orat.* 6.

men,

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men, and created so much mischief in the world: these preternatural distinctions were, I say, brooded by our fault, and are in great part fostered and maintained thereby; for were we generally so good, so just, so charitable as we should be, they could hardly subsist, especially in that measure they do. God indeed (for promoting some good ends, and for prevention of some mischiefs, apt to spring from our ill-nature in this our lapsed state; particularly to prevent the strife and disorder which scrambling would cause among men, presuming on equal right and parity of force,) doth suffer them in some manner to continue, and enjoins us a contented submission to them: but we mistake, if we think that natural equality and community are in effect quite taken away; or that all the world is so cantonized among some few, that the rest have no share therein[z]. No, every man hath still a competent patrimony due to him, and a sufficient provision made for his tolerable subsistence. God hath brought no man hither to be necessarily starved, or pinched with extreme want; but hath assigned to every one a child's portion, in some fair way to be obtained by him, either by legal right, or by humble request, which according to conscience ought to have effect.

[z] Τὸ γὰρ ἐμὸν, καὶ τὸ σὸν, τοῦτο τὸ ψυχρὸν ῥῆμα, καὶ μυρίους πολέμους εἰς τὴν οἰκουμένην εἰσαγαγόν, &c. *Chrys.* tom. 5. λογ. νδ'. et in Act. ii. 47.

Natura omnia omnibus, in commune profudit; sic enim Deus generari jussit omnia, ut pastus omnibus communis esset, et terra foret omnium quædam communis possessio. Natura igitur jus commune generavit, usurpatio jus fecit privatum. *Amb. Offic.* i. 28.

Καὶ γὰρ εἰ μετὰ ἀκριβείας τοῦτο ἐφιλάττετο, ὁ δοῦλος, οὐκ ἐλεύθερος ἦν, οὐκ ἄρχων, οὐκ ἀρχόμενος, ὁ πλούσιος, ὁ πένης, ὁ μικρὸς, ὁ μέγας, ὁ διάκονος ἂν ἐγεγόνει πολέ. *Chrys. in* 1 *Cor. Orat.* 32.

Ὥσπερ ἂν εἴ τις ἐν θεάτρῳ θέαν καλλαβὼν, εἶτα εἰσίοι τοὺς ἐπεισιόντας ἴδιον ἑαυτῷ κρίνων τὸ κοινὸν πᾶσι καλὰ τὴν χρῆσιν προκείμενον· τοιοῦτοί εἰσι καὶ οἱ πλούσιοι· τὰ καὶ κοινὰ προκαλύπτονται ἰδιοποιοῦνται διὰ τὴν φρόνησιν. *Basil. M.*

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No man therefore is allowed to detain, or to deſtroy ſuperfluouſly what another man apparently wants; but is obliged to impart it to him [a]; ſo that rich men are indeed but the treaſurers, the ſtewards, the caterers of God for the reſt of men, having a ſtrict charge to *diſpenſe unto every one his meat in due ſeaſon*, and no juſt privilege to withhold it from any: the honour of diſtribution is conferred on them, as a reward of their fidelity and care; the right of enjoyment is reſerved to the poor, as a proviſion for their neceſſity. Thus hath God wiſely projected, that all his children ſhould both effectually and quietly be provided for, and that none of them ſhould be oppreſſed with penury; ſo that, as St. Paul hath it, *One man's abundance ſhall ſupply another man's want, that there may be an equality:* for ſince no man can enjoy more than he needs, and every man ſhould have ſo much as he needs, there can be really no great inequality among men; the diſtinction will ſcarce remain otherwhere than in fancy. What the philoſopher ſaid of himſelf, *What I have is ſo mine, that it is every man's*, is according to the practice of each man, who is truly and in due meaſure charitable; whereby that ſeemingly enormous [b] diſcrimination among men is well moderated, and the equity of divine Providence is vindicated. But he that ravenouſly graſps for more than he can well uſe, and gripes it faſt into his clutches, ſo that the needy in their diſtreſs cannot come by it, doth pervert that equity which God hath eſtabliſhed in things, defeats his good intention, (ſo far as he can) and brings a ſcandal on his providence; and ſo doing is highly both injurious and impious.

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Matt. xxiv. 45. Luke xii. 42.

2 Cor. viii. 14.

Ego mea ſic habeo, ut omnium ſint. *Demetrius apud Sen. de Ben.* vii. 10.

3. It was alſo (which we ſhould conſider) even

[a] Incaſſum ſe innocentes putant, qui commune Dei munus ſibi privatum vindicant. *Greg. M.*

[b] Ὁ ἀγαπῶν τὸν πλησίον ὡς ἑαυτὸν, οὐδὲν πλεονεκτικός ἐστι τοῦ πλησίον. *Baſil. M.*

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SERM. XXII. one main end of this difference among us, permitted and ordered by God's providence, that as ſome men's induſtry and patience might be exerciſed by their poverty, ſo other men by their wealth ſhould have ability of practiſing juſtice and charity; that ſo both rich and poor might thence become capable of recompences, ſuitable to the worth of ſuch virtuous performances. *Why art thou rich*, ſaith St. Baſil, *and he poor? Surely for this; that thou mayeſt attain the reward of benignity, and faithful diſpenſation; and that he may be honoured with the great prize of patience* [c]. God, in making thee rich, would have thee to be a double benefactor, not only to thy poor neighbour, but alſo to thyſelf, whilſt thou beſtoweſt relief on him, purchaſing a reward to thyſelf. God alſo by this order of things deſigns, that a charitable intercourſe ſhould be maintained among men, mutually pleaſant and beneficial; the rich kindly obliging the poor, and the poor gratefully ſerving the rich. Wherefore by neglecting theſe duties we unadviſedly croſs the good purpoſe of God toward us, depriving ourſelves of the chief advantages our wealth may afford.

4. We ſhould alſo do well to conſider, that a poor man, even as ſuch, is not to be diſregarded, and that poverty itſelf is no ſuch contemptible thing as we may be prone to imagine. There are conſiderations, which may qualify poverty even to diſpute the place with wealth, and to claim precedence to it. If the world vulgarly doth account and call the rich man happy, a better author hath pronounced Luke vi. 20. the poor man ſuch: *Bleſſed are the poor*, doth march in the van of the beatitudes; and a reaſon goeth

[c] Διά τι σὺ μὲ πλουτεῖς, ἐκεῖνον δὲ πένητα; ἢ πάντως ἵνα σὺ χρηστότητος τὴν πιστῆς οἰκονομίας μισθὸν ὑποδέξῃ, κἀκεῖνος τοῖς μεγάλοις ἄθλοις τῆς ὑπομονῆς τιμηθῇ. *Baſil. M.*

Πλοῦτον καὶ πενίαν τοῖς ἀνθρώποις διένειμεν ὁ τῶν ὅλων δημιουργός τε καὶ πρύτανις; οὐκ ἀδίκῳ ψήφῳ χρησάμενος, ἀλλ' ἀφορμὴν ὠφελείας τοῖς πλουσίοις παρίσχων τῶν πενήτων τὴν ἔνδειαν. *Theod. Epiſt.* 23.

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along therewith, which asserteth its right to the place, *for theirs is the kingdom of heaven*; for that they are not only in an equal capacity as men, but in a nearer disposition as poor, to the acquisition of that blissful state; for that poverty (the mistress of sobriety and honest industry, the mother of humility and patience, the nurse of all virtue,) renders men more willing to go, and more expedite in the way toward heaven: by it also we conform to the Son of God himself, the heir of eternal majesty, the Saviour of the world, *who for our sake became poor*, (δι' ἡμᾶς ἐπτώχευσε, for our sake became a beggar) *that we through his poverty* (or beggary) *might become rich:* he willingly chose, he especially dignified and sanctified that depth of poverty, which we so proudly slight and loath. The greatest princes and potentates in the world, the most wealthy and haughty of us all, but for one poor beggar had been irrecoverably miserable: to poverty it is, that every one of us doth owe all the possibility there is, all the hopes we can have of our salvation: and shall we then ingratefully requite it with scorn, or with pitiless neglect? Shall we presume, in the person of any poor man, to abhor or contemn the very poor, but most holy and most happy JESUS, our Lord and Redeemer? No; if we will do poverty right, we must rather for his dear sake and memory defer an especial respect and veneration thereto.

2 Cor. viii. 9.

Dedignatur aliquis paupertatem, cujus tam claræ imagines sunt? *Sen. Consol. ad Helv.* 12.

5. Thus a due reflection on the poor man himself, his nature and state, will induce us to succour. But let us also consider him as related unto ourselves: every such person is our near kinsman, is our brother, is by indissoluble bands of cognation in blood, and agreement in nature, knit and united to us. We are all but several streams issuing from one source, several twigs sprouting from one stock; *one blood*, derived through several channels; one substance, by miraculous efficacy of the divine benediction, multiplied or dilated unto several times and

Acts xvii. 26.

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places. We are all fashioned according to the same original idea, resembling God, our common Father; we are all endowed with the same faculties, inclinations, and affections; we all conspire in the same essential ingredients of our constitution, and in the more notable adjuncts thereof; it is only some inconsiderable accidents, (such as age, place, figure, stature, colour, garb,) which diversify and distinguish us; in which, according to successions of time and chance, we commonly no less differ from ourselves, than we do at present from them: so that in effect and reasonable esteem, every man is not only our brother, but (as Aristotle saith of a friend) ἄλλος αὐτὸς, *another one's self*; is not only our most lively image, but in a manner our very substance; another ourself under a small variation of present circumstances: the most of distinction between us and our poor neighbour consists in exterior show, in movable attire, in casual appendages to the nature of man; so that really when we use him well, we are kind to ourselves; when we yield him courteous regard, we bear respect to our own nature; when we feed and comfort him, we do sustain and cherish a member of our own body[d]. But when we are cruel or harsh to him, we abuse ourselves; when we scorn him, we lay disparagement and disgrace on mankind itself; when we withhold succour or sustenance from him, we do, as the Prophet speaketh, *hide ourselves from our own flesh*; we starve a part of our own body, and wither a branch of our stock; immoderate selfishness so blindeth us, that we oversee and forget our-

Isa. lviii. 7.

[d] Nemo est in genere humano, cui non dilectio, etsi non pro mutua charitate, pro ipsa tamen communis naturæ societate debetur. *Aug. Ep.* 121.

Οἰκεῖον πᾶς ἄνθρωπος ἀνθρώπῳ τὸ φίλον. *Arist.*

Ἐν ἀλλοτρίοις παύεται θεραπευτέον τὸ συγγενὲς, τὸ ὁμόδουλον. *Greg. Naz.*

Nihil est unum uni tam simile, tam par, quam omnes inter nosmetipsos sumus. *Cic. de Leg.* 1.

selves:

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ſelves: it is in this, as it is in other good ſenſes, true what the Wiſe Man ſaith, *The merciful man doth good to his own ſoul; but he that is cruel troubleth his own fleſh.* SERM. XXII. Prov. xi. 17.

6. Farther, as the poor man is ſo nearly allied to us by ſociety of common nature, ſo is he more ſtrictly joined to us by the bands of ſpiritual conſanguinity. All Chriſtians (high and low, rich and poor) are children of the ſame heavenly Father, ſpring from the ſame incorruptible ſeed, are regenerated to the ſame lively hope, are coheirs of the ſame heavenly inheritance; are all members of one body, (*members*, ſaith St. Paul, *one of another*,) and animated by one holy Spirit: which relation, as it is the moſt noble and moſt cloſe that can be, ſo it ſhould breed the greateſt endearments, and ſhould expreſs itſelf in correſpondent effects; it ſhould render us full of affection and ſympathy one toward another; it ſhould make us to tender the needs, and feel the ſufferings of any Chriſtian as our own; it ſhould diſpoſe us freely to communicate whatever we have, how precious ſoever, to any of our brethren; this holy friendſhip ſhould eſtabliſh a charitable equality and community among us, both in point of honour and of eſtate: for ſince all things conſiderable are common unto us, ſince we are all purchaſed and purified by the ſame precious blood, ſince we all partake of the ſame precious faith, of the ſame high calling, of the ſame honourable privileges, of the ſame glorious promiſes and hopes; ſince we all have the ſame Lord and Saviour; why ſhould theſe ſecular trifles be ſo private and particular among us? Why ſhould not ſo huge a parity in thoſe only valuable things not wholly, (I ſay, not in worldly ſtate, or outward appearance, ſuch as the preſervation of order in ſecular affairs requireth, but) in our opinion and affection, extinguiſh that ſlight diſtinction of *rich* and *poor*, in concernments temporal? How can we ſlight ſo noble, ſo great a perſon-

Rom. xii. 5. Are all one. Gal. iii. 28. Πάντες γὰρ ὑμεῖς εἷς ἐστε ἐν Χριστῷ Ἰησοῦ. *Chryſ. in Joh. Or.* 15. φίλων γὰρ ἀδὲν ἴδιον, οὔτινες φίλοι ὀρθῶς πεφύκασ', ἀλλὰ κοινὰ χρήματα. *Eurip. Androm.*

Col. iii. 11.

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age as a Christian, for wanting a little dross? How can we deem ourselves much his superior, upon so petty an advantage, for having that, which is not worth speaking or thinking of, in comparison to what he enjoyeth? Our Lord himself is not ashamed to call the least among us his brother and his friend: and shall we then disdain to yield to such an one the regard and treatment suitable to such a quality? Shall we not honour any brother of our Lord? Shall we not be civil and kind to any friend of his? If we do not, how can we pretend to bear any true respect or affection unto himself? It is his express precept, that the greatest among us should, in imitation of his most humble and charitable self, be ready to serve the meanest; and, that we should *in honour prefer one another*, and *in lowliness of mind esteem others better than ourselves*, are apostolical rules, extending indifferently to rich and poor, which are plainly violated by disregarding the poor. Yea, this relation should, according to St. John's doctrine, dispose us not only freely to impart these temporal goods, but even, if occasion be, willingly to expose our very lives for our brethren: *Hereby*, saith he, *we perceive the love of God, because he laid down his life for us; and we ought to lay down our lives for our brethren.* How greatly then are they deficient from their duty, how little in truth are they Christians, who are unwilling to part with the very superfluities and excrements of their fortune for the relief of a poor Christian! Thus considering our brother, may breed in us charitable dispositions toward him, and induce us to the practice of these duties.

Heb. ii. 11. Matt. xxv. 40. John xv. 14. Matt. xx. 26. Rom. xii. 10. Phil. ii. 3. 1 John iii. 16.

IV. Head of discourse.

Moreover, if we reflect upon ourselves, and consider either our nature, or our state here, we cannot but observe many strong engagements to the same practice.

1. The very constitution, frame, and temper of our nature directeth and inclineth us thereto; whence, by observing those duties, we observe our own

own nature, we improve it, we advance it to the beſt perfection it is capable of; by neglecting them, we thwart, we impair, we debaſe the ſame——*hæc noſtri pars optima ſenſus*; the beſt of our natural inclinations (thoſe ſacred relicks of God's image originally ſtamped on our minds) do ſenſibly prompt, and vehemently urge us to mercy and pity: the very ſame bowels, which in our own want do by a lively ſenſe of pain inform us thereof, and inſtigate us to provide for its relief, do alſo grievouſly reſent the diſtreſſes of another, admoniſhing us thereby, and provoking us to yield him ſuccour. Such is the natural ſympathy between men, (diſcernible in all, but appearing moſt vigorous in the beſt natures) that we cannot ſee, cannot hear of, yea, can hardly imagine the calamities of other men, without being ſomewhat diſturbed and afflicted ourſelves. As alſo nature, to the acts requiſite toward preſervation of our life, hath annexed a ſenſible pleaſure, forcibly enticing us to the performance of them: ſo hath ſhe made the communication of benefits to others to be accompanied with a very delicious reliſh upon the mind of him that practiſes it; nothing indeed carrying with it a more pure and ſavoury delight than beneficence. A man may be virtuouſly voluptuous, and a laudable Epicure by doing much good; for to receive good, even in the judgment of Epicurus himſelf, (the great patron of pleaſure) is no wiſe ſo pleaſant as to do it[e]: God and nature therefore within us do ſolicit the poor man's caſe: even our own eaſe and ſatisfaction demand from us compaſſion and kindneſs towards him; by exerciſing them, we hearken to nature's wiſe diſciplines, and comply with her kindly inſtincts; we cheriſh good humour, and ſweeten our complexion; ſo ennobling our minds, we become not only more like to God, but more perfectly men;

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Juven. Sat. 15. v. 133. —mutuus ut nos Affectus petere auxilium, et præſtare juberet. *Juven.* 15. v. 149. Φιλόπτοχον καὶ συμπαθῆ πρὸς τὰ τῶν ἀνθρώπων γινόμενα. *Arch. ad Mon.* 852.

[e] Ἐπίκουρος τὸ εὖ ποιεῖν ᾧ εὖ πάσχειν ἡδὺ μόνον καλλιον, ἀλλὰ καὶ ἥδιον εἶναι φησί. *Plut. de Philoſ. conv. cum Princ.*

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SERM. XXII. by the contrary practice we rebel againſt the laws, and pervert the due courſe of our nature; we do weaken, corrupt, and ſtifle that which is beſt in us; we harden and ſtupify our ſouls; ſo monſtrouſly degenerating from the perfection of our kind, and becoming rather like ſavage beaſts than ſociable men; yea, ſomewhat worſe perhaps than many beaſts; for commonly brutes will combine to the ſuccour of one another, they will defend and help thoſe of the ſame kind.

2. And if the ſenſitive part within us doth ſuggeſt ſo much, the rational dictates more unto us: that heavenly faculty, having capacities ſo wide, and ſo mighty energies, was ſurely not created to ſerve mean or narrow deſigns; it was not given us to ſcrape eternally in earth, or to amaſs heaps of clay for private enjoyment; for the ſervice of one puiſne creature, for the ſuſtenance or ſatisfaction of a ſingle carcaſe: 'tis much below an intelligent perſon to weary himſelf with ſervile toils, and diſtract his mind with ignoble cares for concernments ſo low and ſcanty: but to regard and purſue the common good of men; to diſpenſe, adviſe, and aid, where need requires; to diffuſe its virtue all about in beneficial effects; theſe are operations worthy of reaſon, theſe are employments congruous to the native excellency of that divine power implanted in us; ſuch performances declare indeed what a man is, whence he ſprang, and whither he tends.

3. Farther, examining ourſelves, we may alſo obſerve, that we are in reality, what our poor neighbour appears to be, in many reſpects no leſs indigent and impotent than he: we no leſs, yea far more, for our ſubſiſtence depend upon the arbitrary bounty of another, than he ſeemeth to rely upon ours. We as defectible creatures do continually want ſupport; we as grievous ſinners do always need mercy; every moment we are contracting huge debts, far beyond our ability to diſcharge; debts of gratitude for benefits

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nefits received, debts of guilt for offences committed; we therefore perpetually ſtand obliged to be craving for mercy and relief at the gates of heaven. We all from prince to peaſant live merely upon alms, and are moſt really in condition beggars: *to pray always*, is a duty incumbent on us from the condition of our nature, as well as by the command of God. Such a likeneſs in ſtate ſhould therefore diſpoſe us to ſuccour our fellows, and, δανείζειν θεῷ ἔλεον ἐλέᾳ χρῄζοντας, *to lend mercy to God, who need mercy from him*, as the good Father ſpeaketh. We ſhould (as the Apoſtle adviſes and argues) *remember them that are in bonds, as bound with them; and them which ſuffer adverſity, as being ourſelves alſo in the body*; as being companions in neceſſity, or ſubject to the like diſtreſs. If we daily receive mercy and relief, yet, unmindful of our obligation to God, refuſe them to others, ſhall we not deſerve to hear that dreadful exprobration, *O thou wicked ſervant, I forgave thee all that debt, becauſe thou deſiredſt me: ſhouldeſt not thou alſo have had compaſſion on thy fellow-ſervant, even as I had pity on thee?*

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Greg. Naz.

Heb. xiii. 3.

Matt. xviii. 32, 33.

4. The great incertainty and inſtability of our condition doth alſo require our conſideration. We, that now flouriſh in a fair and full eſtate, may ſoon be in the caſe of that poor creature, who now ſues for our relief; we, that this day enjoy the wealth of Job, may the morrow need his patience: there are Sabeans, which may come, and drive away our cattle; there are tempeſts, which may ariſe, and ſmite down our houſes; there is a fire of God, which may fall from heaven, and conſume our ſubſtance; a meſſenger of all theſe miſchiefs may, for all we know, be preſently at our doors; it happened ſo to a better man than we, as unexpectedly, and with as ſmall ground to fear it, as it can arrive to us: all our wealth is ſurrounded with dangers, and expoſed to caſualties innumerable: violence may ſnatch it from us, treachery may cheat us of it; miſchance may ſeize thereon, a ſecret moth

Ὅμως δ' ἔιεστι τοῖσιν εὖ σκοπεῖν τὸν εὖ πράσσοντα μὴ σφαλῆ ποτέ. *Soph. in Trachin.*

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SERM. XXII. moth may devour it; the wiſdom of Providence for our trial, or its juſtice for our puniſhment, may bereave us thereof; its own light and fluid nature (if no other accountable cauſes were apparent) might eaſily ſerve to waft it from us; for, *Riches*, ſaith the Wiſe Man, *make themſelves wings*, (they, it ſeems, do need no help for that,) *and fly away like as an eagle toward heaven*; that is, of their own accord they do ſwiftly convey themſelves away, out of our ſight, and beyond our reach; they are but wind: *What profit*, ſays the Preacher, *hath he that laboureth for the wind?* For wind; that is, for a thing which can nowiſe be fixed or ſettled in one corner: which, therefore, 'tis a vanity to conceive that we can ſurely appropriate, or long retain. How then can we think to ſtand firm upon a place ſo ſlippery? how can we build any confidence on a bottom ſo looſe and brittle? how can we ſuffer our minds to be ſwelled up like bubbles with vain conceit, by the breath of ſuch things, more fleeting and vertiginous than any air? againſt the precepts of the wiſeſt and beſt men: *If riches increaſe*, ſaith the Pſalmiſt, *ſet not your heart* on them: *Wilt thou ſet thine eyes upon that which is not?* ſaith the Wiſe Man: (that is, wilt thou regard that which is ſo tranſitory and evanid, that it hardly may be deemed real; which we can ſcarce look on, before it is gone?) And, *Charge them*, ſaith St. Paul, *that are rich in this world, that they be not high-minded, nor truſt in uncertain riches:* (ἐπὶ πλούτου ἀδηλότητι, in the obſcurity, or inevidence of riches; things, which we can never plainly diſcern how long we ſhall keep them, how much we can enjoy them;) what ſhould make us unwilling, with certain advantages to ourſelves, freely to let that go, which preſently without our leave may forſake us? How can we reaſonably judge our caſe much different from that of the pooreſt body, whenas in a trice we may perhaps change places and perſons; when, the ſcene turning, he may

Prov. xxiii. 5.

Eccleſ. v. 16.

Pſal. lxii. 10.

Prov. xxiii. 5.

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may be advanced unto our wealth, we may be depreſſed into his want[f]? Since every age yieldeth inſtances of ſome Crœſus, ſome Polycrates, ſome Pompey, ſome Job, ſome Nebuchodonoſor, who within a ſmall compaſs of time doth appear to all men the object both of admiration and pity, is to the leſs wiſe the mark both of envy and ſcorn[g]; ſeeing every day preſenteth unexpected viciſſitudes, the ſea of human affairs continually ebbing and flowing, now rolling on this, now on the other ſhore, its reſtleſs waves of profit and credit; ſince eſpecially there is a God, who arbitrarily diſpoſeth things, and with a turn of his hand changeth the ſtate of men; who, as the Scripture ſaith, *maketh rich and poor, bringeth low, and lifteth up; poureth contempt upon princes; raiſeth the poor out of the duſt, and lifteth the beggar from the dunghill, to ſet them among princes, and to make them inherit the throne of glory*: ſeeing, I ſay, apparently ſuch is the condition of things here, that we may ſoon need his pity and help, who now requeſteth ours, why ſhould we not be very ready to afford them to him? Why ſhould we not gladly embrace our opportunity, and uſe our turn well; becoming aforehand with others, and preventing their reciprocal contempt or neglect of us hereafter: *Caſt thy bread upon the waters; for thou ſhalt find it after many days. Give a portion to ſeven, and alſo unto eight; for thou knoweſt not what evil ſhall be upon the earth*: that is, conſidering the inconſtancy and uncertainty of affairs here, and what adverſity may befal thee, be liberal upon all occaſions, and thou ſhalt (even a good while after) find returns of thy liberality upon thee: ſo the Wiſe Man adviſes, and ſo wiſdom certainly dictates that we ſhould do.

1 Sam. ii. 7. Job xii. 21. Pſal. cvii. 41. cxiii. 7, 8. Eccleſ. xi. 1, 2.

[f] Καὶ γὰρ ἰσχάτης ἀνοίας ἂν εἴη ὧν ἢ ἄκοντες ἐξίεσθαι μέλλομεν ἐτέροις, τέτων μὴ μεταδῶναι ἑκόντας τοῖς δεομένοις. *Chryſ.* tom. v. *Orat.* 55.

[g] Sejanus—quo die illum Senatus deduxerat, populus in fruſta diviſit. *Sen. de Tranq.* 2.

5. And

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5. And equity doth exact no less: for were any of us in the needy man's plight, (as easily we may be reduced thereto) we should believe our case deserved commiseration; we should importunately demand relief; we should be grievously displeased at a repulse; we should apprehend ourselves very hardly dealt with, and sadly we should complain of inhumanity and cruelty, if succour were refused to us. In all equity therefore we should be apt to minister the same to others; for nothing can be more unreasonable, or unjust, than to require or expect that from another, which in a like case we are unwilling to render unto him: it is a plain deviation from that fundamental rule, which is the base of all justice, and virtually the sum, as our Saviour telleth us, of whatever is prescribed us: *All things whatsoever ye would that men should do to you, do ye even so to them, for this is the Law and the Prophets.* I add, that upon these considerations, by unmerciful dealing, we put ourselves into a very bad and tickliſh condition, wholly depending upon the constancy of that which is most inconstant; so that if our fortune do fail, we can neither reasonably hope for, nor justly pretend to, any relief or comfort from others: *He that doeth good turns is mindful of that which may come hereafter; and when he falleth, he shall find a stay.*

Beneficium qui dare nescit, injuste petit. *Laber. Mim.*

Matt. vii. 12.

Eccles. lii. 31.

6. We should also remember concerning ourselves, that we are mortal and frail. Were we immortal, or could we probably retain our possessions for ever in our hands, yea, could we foresee some definite space of time, considerably long, in which we might assuredly enjoy our stores, it might seem somewhat excusable to scrape hard, and to hold fast; to do so might look like rational providence: but since *riches are not for ever, nor doth the crown endure to all generations*, as the Wise Man speaketh; since they must infallibly be soon left, and there is no certainty of keeping them for any time, it is very unaccountable why we should so greedily seek them, and hug

Prov. xxvii. 24.

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hug them ſo fondly. *The rich man*, ſaith St. James, *as the flower of the graſs ſhall paſs away*; it is his ſpecial doom *to fade away* ſuddenly: it is obvious why in many reſpects he is ſomewhat more than others obnoxious to the fatal ſtroke, and upon ſpecial accounts of juſtice he may be farther more expoſed thereto: conſidering the caſe of the rich fool in the Goſpel, we may eaſily diſcern them; we ſhould reckon, that it may happen to us as it did there to him; that after we have reared great barns, and *ſtored up much goods for many years*, our *ſoul this very night* may be *required of us*: however, if it be uncertain when, it is moſt certain, that after a very ſhort time our thread will be ſpun out; then ſhall we be rifled, and quite ſtript of all; becoming ſtark-naked, as when we came into the world: we ſhall not carry with us one grain of our gliſtering metals, or one rag of our gaudy ſtuff; our ſtately houſes, our fine gardens, and our ſpacious walks, muſt all be exchanged for a cloſe hole under ground; we muſt for ever bid farewell to our pomps and magnificences, to our feaſts and jollities, to our ſports and paſtimes; not one of all our numerous and ſplendid retinue, no companion of our pleaſure, no admirer of our fortune, no flatterer of our vices can wait upon us; deſolate and unattended we muſt go down to the chambers of darkneſs: then ſhall we find, that to die rich, as men are wont improperly to ſpeak, is really to die moſt poor; that to have carefully kept our money, is to have loſt it utterly; that by leaving much, we do indeed leave worſe than nothing: to have been wealthy, if we have been illiberal and unmerciful, will be no advantage or ſatisfaction to us after we are gone hence; yea, it will be the cauſe of huge damage, and bitter regret unto us. All our treaſures will not procure us any favour, or purchaſe one advocate for us in that impartial world; yea, it ſhall be they which will there proſecute us with clamorous accuſations, will bear ſore teſtimony againſt

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James i. 10, 11.

Luke xii. 20.

1 Tim. vi. 7. Eccleſ. v. 15. Job i. 21.

Iſ. xiv. 11.

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SERM. XXII. against us, (*The rust of them*, saith St. James, *shall be a witness against us*, signifying our unjust or uncharitable detention of them,) will obtain a most heavy sentence upon us; they will render our audit more difficult, and enflame our reckoning; they will aggravate the guilt of our sins with imputations of unfaithfulness and ingratitude; so with their load they will press us deeper into perdition: to omit, that having so ill managed them, we shall leave them behind us as marks of obloquy, and monuments of infamy upon our memories; for ordinarily of such a rich person it is true, that Job says of him, *Men shall clap their hands at him, and shall hiss him out of his place*; like one who departs from off this stage, after having very ill acted his part. Is it not therefore infinitely better to prevent this being necessarily and unprofitably deprived of our goods, by seasonably disposing them so as may conduce to our benefit, and our comfort, and our honour [h]; being very indifferent and unconcerned in our affection toward them; modest and humble in our conceits about them; moderate and sober in our enjoyments of them; contented upon any reasonable occasion to lose or leave them; and especially most ready to dispense them in that best way, which God hath prescribed, according to the exigencies of humanity and charity? By thus ordering our riches, we shall render them benefits and blessings to us; we shall by them procure sure friendship and favour, great worship and respect in the other world; having so lived, (in the exercise of bounty and mercy) we shall truly die rich, and in effect carry all our goods along with us, or rather we have thereby sent them before us; having, like wise merchants, transmitted and drawn

James v. 3. Luke xvi. 25. vi. 24. xii. 21. Matt. xxv. 30. James v. 5. 1 Tim. vi. 9. Job xxvii. 19. 23. Luke xvi. 9.

[h] Τῆς γὰρ ἰσχάτης ἀνοίας ἐστὶν ἀφεῖναί τι τῶν ἡμετέρων ἀναπομεῖναι ἐνταῦθα, ἡμῶν μικρὸν ὕστερον μελλόντων ἐντεῦθεν ἀποδημεῖν· κ᾽ γὰρ ὅπερ ἀπολειφθῇ ζημία γίνεται· πάντα τοίνυν ἐκεῖ προπεμπέσθω, ἵνδα κ᾽ ἡμεῖς διατρίβειν μέλλομεν λοιπόν. *Chrys.* tom. v. *Orat.* 54.

them

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them by a moſt ſafe conveyance into our country and home; where infallibly we ſhall find them, and with everlaſting content enjoy them. So conſidering ourſelves, and our ſtate, will diſpoſe us to the practice of theſe duties. SERM. XXII.

Farthermore, if we contemplate our wealth itſelf, we may therein deſcry great motives to bounty. V. Head of Diſcourſe.

1. Thus to employ our riches is really the beſt uſe they are capable of; not only the moſt innocent, moſt worthy, moſt plauſible, but the moſt ſafe, moſt pleaſant, moſt advantageous, and conſequently in all reſpects moſt prudent way of diſpoſing them. To keep them cloſe without uſing or enjoying them at all, is a moſt ſottiſh extravagance, or a ſtrange kind of madneſs; a man thence affecting to be rich quite impoveriſheth himſelf, diſpoſſeſſeth himſelf of all, and alienateth from himſelf his eſtate [j]: his gold is no more his than when it was in the Indies, or lay hid in the mines; his corn is no more his than if it ſtood growing in Arabia or China; he is no more owner of his lands than he is maſter of Jeruſalem, or Grand Cairo: for what difference is there, whether diſtance of place, or baſeneſs of mind, ſever things from him? whether his own heart, or another man's hand detain them from his uſe? whether he hath them not at all, or hath them to no purpoſe? whether one is a beggar out of neceſſity, or by choice? is preſſed to want, or a volunteer thereto? Such a one may fancy himſelf rich, and others as wiſe as himſelf may repute him ſo: but ſo diſtracted perſons to themſelves, and to one another, do ſeem great princes, and ſtyle themſelves ſuch; with as much reaſon almoſt he might pretend to be wiſe, or to be good. Riches are, χρήματα, things, whoſe nature conſiſts in uſefulneſs [k]; abſtract that,

[j] Σκορπιζόμενος ὁ πλοῦτος πέφυκε παραμένειν, συνεχόμενος ἀλλοτριοῦται. *Baſil. M.*

Tam deeſt avaro quod habet, quam quod non habet.

[k] Καὶ γὰρ χρήματα διὰ τοῦτο λέγεται, ὐχ ἵνα κατορύξωμεν, ἀλλ' ἵνα εἰς δέον αὐτοῖς χρησώμεθα. *Chryſ. in Mat. Orat.* 49.

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they become nothing, things of no conſideration or value; he that hath them is no more concerned in them than he that hath them not: it is the art and ſkill to uſe affluence of things wiſely and nobly, which makes it wealth, and conſtitutes him rich that hath it; otherwiſe the cheſts may be crammed, and the barns ſtuffed full, while the man is miſerably poor and beggarly: it is in this ſenſe true, which the Wiſe Man ſays, *There is that maketh himſelf rich, yet hath nothing.* But the very having riches (will ſuch a man ſay) is matter of reputation; men do eſteem and honour him that hath them. True, if he knows how, and hath the mind to uſe them well: otherwiſe all the credit they yield conſiſts in making their maſter ridiculous to wiſe men, and infamous among all men. But, putting caſe that any ſhould be ſo fooliſh as to reſpect us merely for ſeeming rich, why ſhould we accommodate our practice to their vain opinion, or be baſe ourſelves, becauſe others are not wiſe? But, however, (may he ſay again) it is a pleaſant thing to ſee them; a heap of gold is the moſt lovely ſpectacle that one can behold; it does a man's heart good to view an abundance of good things about him. For this plea, indeed, he hath a good author: this, it ſhould ſeem, was all the benefit the Wiſe Man obſerved in them, accruing to ſuch perſons: *What good*, ſaith he, *is there to the owners thereof, ſaving the beholding of them with their eyes?* But if this be all they are good for, it is, one would think, a very ſlim benefit they afford, little able to balance the pain and care requiſite to the acquiſt and cuſtody of them; a benefit indeed not proper to the poſſeſſor; for any one may look on them as well as he, or on the like; any one at pleaſure may enjoy better ſights; all the riches and ornaments of nature, the glorious ſplendours of heaven, and the ſweet beauties of the field, are expoſed to common view; the choiceſt magnificences and gallantries of the world do ſtudiouſly preſent themſelves to every man's eye; theſe in part every man truly may appropriate to himſelf;

Deſunt inopi multa, avaro omnia. *Sen. Epiſt.* 108.

Prov. xiii. 7.

Eccleſ. v. 11.

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himſelf; and by imagination any man can as well take all that he ſees for his own, as the tenacious miſer doth fancy his dear pelf to be his. SERM. XXII.

But mine heir (perhaps he will farther ſay) will thank me, will praiſe me, will bleſs me for my great care and providence: If he doth, what is that to thee? Nothing of that will concern thee, or can reach thee: thou ſhalt not hear what he ſays, or feel any good from what he does: and moſt probably thou art miſtaken in thy opinion concerning him; as thou *knoweſt not who* he ſhall be, *that ſhall gather all thou heapeſt up*, or *ſhall rule over all thy labour*, (*whether he ſhall be a wiſe man, or a fool*, a kinſman, or a ſtranger, a friend, or a foe,) ſo thou canſt as little gueſs what he will think or ſay: if he hath wit, he may ſweetly laugh at thee for thy fond wiſdom; if he hath none, his commendations will little adorn thy memory; he will to thy diſgrace ſpend what thou leaveſt, as vainly as thou didſt get or keep it. But (this to be ſure he will in the end ſay for himſelf) money is a good reſerve againſt neceſſary occaſions, or bad times that may come; againſt the time of old age, of ſickneſs, of adverſity; it is the ſureſt friend a man can have in ſuch caſes, which, when all fails, will be ready to help him: *The rich man's wealth is his ſtrong city:* the Wiſe Man he thinks never ſpake more wiſely; he therefore will not diſmantle this fortreſs, but will keep it well ſtored, letting therefore his wealth lie dead and uſeleſs by him. But (to let paſs now the profane infidelity of this plea, excluding all hope in God, and ſubſtituting our providence in the room of his) what a folly is it thus to anticipate evil, and to create to ourſelves a preſent adverſity from a ſuſpicion of one future; to pinch ourſelves now, leſt we ſhould ſuffer hereafter; to pine to-day, becauſe we can imagine it poſſible that we may ſtarve to-morrow; to forego certain occaſions of enjoying our goods, for that perchance the like occaſions may happen one day, we know not when; not to uſe things now, when reaſon bids us, becauſe they may be uſeful at another time! Not conſider-

Pſal. xxxix. 6. Eccleſ. ii. 19.

Prov. x. 15.

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ing alſo, that many intervenient accidents, more probably than a moderate and handſome uſe of our wealth, may crop the excreſcences thereof.

2. But ſetting aſide theſe abſurd excuſes of penuriouſneſs, we may conſider, that, ſecluding the good uſe of them in beneficence, riches are very impertinent, very cumberſome, very dangerous, very miſchievous things; either ſuperfluous toys, or troubleſome clogs, or treacherous ſnares, or rather all theſe in combination, productive of trouble, ſorrow, and ſin. A ſmall pittance will and muſt ſuffice, to all reaſonable purpoſes, to ſatisfy our neceſſities, to procure conveniences, to yield innocent delight and eaſe: our nature doth not require, nor can bear much: (*Take heed and beware of covetouſneſs*, ſaith our Lord; *for a man's life conſiſteth not in the abundance of the things, which he poſſeſſeth*; that is, a man may live well without it:) all the reſt, ſetting beneficence apart, can only ſerve vanity or vice, will make us really fools and ſlaves[1]. (*They that will be rich*, ſaith the Apoſtle, *fall into temptations and a ſnare, and into many fooliſh and hurtful luſts, which drown men in deſtruction and perdition.*) They puff up our minds with vain and falſe conceits; making us, as if we were in a dream or frenzy, to take ourſelves for other perſons, more great, more wiſe, more good, more happy than we are; for conſtantly as the Wiſe Man obſerved, *The rich man is wiſe in his own conceit: Great men are not always wiſe.* And Agar thus intimates in his prayer, *Remove far from me vanity and lies; give me neither poverty nor riches.* They render us inſenſible and forgetful of God, of ourſelves, of piety and virtue, of all that is good and worthy of us: (*Leſt I be full*, ſaid that good man again, aſſigning a reaſon why he deprecated being rich, *and deny thee, and ſay, Who is the Lord?*) they ſwallow up our thoughts, our affections,

Luke xii. 15.
1 Tim. vi. 8.
1 Tim. vi. 9.
Prov. xxviii. 11.
Job xxxii. 9.
Prov. xxx. 8.
Prov. xxx. 9.

[1] Corporis exigua deſideria ſunt; frigus ſubmovere vult, alimentis famem ac ſitim extinguere; quicquid extra concupiſcitur, vitiis, non uſibus, laboratur. *Sen. Conſ. ad Helv.* 9.

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our endeavours, our time and leisure, possessing ours hearts with a doting love unto them, (excluding other good affections) distracting our minds with anxious cares about them, (choaking other good thoughts,) encumbering all our life with business about them, (inconsistent with due attention to our other more weighty and necessary concernments,) filling our heads with suspicions and fears, piercing our hearts with troubles and sorrows; they immerse our souls in all the follies of pride, in all the filths of luxury, in all the mischiefs emergent from sloth and stupidity; they are *the root of all evils* unto us, and the greatest obstructions of our true happiness, rendering salvation almost impossible, and heaven in a manner inaccessible to us: so that to be rich, (if severed from a sober mind, and a free heart) is a great disease, and the source of many grievous distempers both of body and mind, from which we cannot well otherwise secure or rescue ourselves, than by liberally spending them in works of bounty and mercy: so shall we ease ourselves of the burthens, so shall we elude the temptations, so shall we abandon the vices, and so shall we escape all the sad mischiefs incident to them: thus to use wealth shall turn it into a convenience and an ornament of our lives, into a considerable blessing, and a ground of much comfort to us. Excluding this use of wealth, or abstracting a capacity of doing good therewith, nothing is more pitiful and despicable than it; it is but like the load or the trappings of an ass: a wise man on that condition would not choose it, or endure to be pestered with it; but would serve it as those philosophers did, who flung it away, that it might not disturb their contemplations: 'tis the power it affords of benefiting men, which only can season and ingratiate it to the relish of such a person; otherwise it is evidently true, which the Wise Man affirms, Prov. xv. 16. *Better is a little with the fear of the Lord, than great treasure, and trouble therewith.*

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Matt. vi. 24. Eccles. xxxi. 1. Matt. xiii. 22. Luke x. 41. 2 Tim. ii. 4. Jam. v. 5. Luke xvi. 19. 1 Tim. vi. 10. Matt. xix. 23, 24.

Ἀποφόρημα τι τῶν ὑλικῶν ἵνα πάλιν κυφότερος. Naz. Or. 27.

3. Again: we may consider, that to dispense our

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SERM. XXII. wealth liberally, is the beſt way to preſerve it, and to continue maſters thereof; what we give, is not thrown away, but ſaved from danger[m]: while we detain it at home (as it ſeems to us) it really is abroad, and at adventures; it is out at ſea, ſailing perilouſly in ſtorms, near rocks and ſhelves, amongſt pirates; nor can it ever be ſafe, till it is brought into this port, or enſured this way: when we have beſtowed it on the poor, then we have lodged it in unqueſtionable ſafety; in a place where no rapine, no deceit, no miſhap, no corruption can ever by any means come at it[n]. All our doors and bars, all our forces and guards, all the circumſpection and vigilancy we can uſe, are no defence or ſecurity at all in compariſon to this diſpoſal thereof: the poor man's ſtomach is a granary for our corn, which never can be exhauſted; the poor man's back is a wardrobe for our clothes, which never can be pillaged; the poor man's pocket is a bank for our money, which never can diſappoint or deceive us: all the rich traders in the world may decay and break; but the poor man can never fail, except God himſelf turn bankrupt; for what we give to the poor, we deliver and entruſt in his hands, out of which no force can wring it, no craft can filch it; it is laid up in heaven, whither no thief can climb, where no moth or ruſt do abide. In deſpite of all the fortune, of all the might, of all the malice in the world, the liberal man will ever be rich; for God's providence is his eſtate; God's wiſdom and power are his de-

[m] Μηδὲ νόμιζε τὴν ἐλεημοσύνην ἀνάλυμα εἶναι, ἀλλὰ πρόσοδον, μηδὲ δαπάνην, ἀλλὰ πραγματείαν, μείζω γὰρ λαμβάνεις, ἢ δίδως, &c. *Chryſ.* tom. v. p. 208.

[n] Μὴ τοίνυν φειδώμεθα χρημάτων, μᾶλλον δὲ φειδώμεθα τῶν χρημάτων· ὁ γὰρ φειδόμενος τῶν ὄντων εἰς τὰς τῶν πενήτων χεῖρας, αὐτὰ ἀναποτίθεται εἰς τὸν ἄσυλον θησαυρὸν καὶ ληϊῶν καὶ οἰκέτας καὶ συκοφάντας κακέρδους, καὶ πάσας ἐφόδους ἀνάλωτον. *Chryſ.* tom. v. *Orat.* 55.

Multi Sancti, et Sanctæ omnimodo caventes ipſas velut matres deliciarum divitias diſpergendo pauperibus abjecerunt, et tali modo in cœleſtibus theſauros tutius condiderunt. *Aug. Ep.* 121.

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fence; God's love and favour are his reward; God's word is his assurance; who hath said it, that *He which giveth to the poor, shall not lack:* no vicissitude therefore of things can surprise him, or find him unfurnished; no disaster can impoverish him; no adversity can overwhelm him; he hath a certain reserve against all times and occasions: he that *deviseth liberal things, by liberal things shall he stand*, saith the Prophet. But, on the other hand, being niggardly is the likeliest course we can take to lose our wealth and estate; we thereby expose them to danger, and leave them defenceless; we subject them to the envious eye, to the slanderous tongue, to the ravenous and insidious hand; we deprive them of divine protection, which if it be away, *The watchman waketh but in vain:* we provoke God irrecoverably to take it from us, as he did the talent from that unprofitable servant, who did not use it well. We do indeed thereby yield God just cause of war and enmity against us; which being, *Omnia dat qui justa negat*; we do forfeit all to divine justice, by denying that portion which belongs to him, and which he claims. Can we hope to live in quiet possession of any thing, if we refuse to pay our due tributes and taxes imposed upon us by our almighty Sovereign; if we live in such rebellion against his authority, such violation of his right, such diffidence to his word? No: *He that trusteth in his riches shall fall; but the righteous shall flourish as a branch:* such is the difference between the covetous and the liberal, in point of security and success concerning their estate.

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Prov. xxviii. 27.

Is. xxxii. 8.

Psal. cxxvii. 1.

Prov. xi. 28.

Even according to the human and ordinary way of esteeming things, (abstracting from the special providence of God) the liberal person hath, in consequence of his bounty, more real security for his wealth, than this world hath any other: he thereby gets an interest in the gratitude and affection of those whom he obligeth, together with the goodwill and respect of all men, who are spectators of his

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virtuous and generous dealing: the hearts and memories of men are repositories to him of a treasure, which nothing can extort from him, or defraud him of. If any mischance should arrive, or any want come near him, all men would be ready to commiserate him, every man would hasten to his succour. As when a haughty, a greedy, or a gripple man do fall into calamity or disgrace, scarce any one regardeth or pitieth him: fortune, deserting such a person, carries all with it, few or none stick to him; his most zealous flatterers are commonly the first that forsake him; contempt and neglect are the only adherents to his condition; that of the Wise Man appears verified, *He that hideth his eyes from the poor, shall have many a curse.* So the courteous and bountiful person, when fortune seems to frown on him, hath a sure refuge in the good-will and esteem of men; all men, upon the accounts of honour and honesty, take themselves to be concerned in his case, and engaged to favour him; even those, who before were strangers, become then his friends, and in effect discover their affection to him; it, in the common judgment of people, appears an indignity and a disgrace to mankind, that such a man should want or suffer.

Mirabis cum tu argento post omnia ponas, Si nemo præstet quem non mercaris amorem. *Hor. Serm.* i. 1.

Prov. xxviii. 27.

4. Nay farther, we may consider, that exercising bounty is the most advantageous method of improving and increasing an estate; but that being tenacious and illiberal, doth tend to the diminution and decay thereof. The way to obtain a great increase, is to sow much: he that sows little, how can he expect a good crop? It is as true in spiritual husbandry, as in the others; that *what a man soweth, that he shall reap*, both in kind, and according to proportion: so that great husbandman St. Paul assureth us, *He that soweth sparingly shall reap sparingly; but he that soweth bountifully shall also reap bountifully:* and Solomon means the same, when he saith, *To him that soweth righteousness, shall be a sure reward.* The way to gain abundantly is, you know well, to trade boldly;

Gal. vi. 7, 8.

2 Cor. ix. 6. 10.

Prov. xi. 18.

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boldly; he that will not adventure any thing con- SERM. XXII.
ſiderable, how can he think of a large return? *Honour the Lord with thy ſubſtance, ſo ſhall thy barns be filled with plenty, and thy preſſes ſhall burſt out with new wine.* Prov. iii. 9, 10. 'Tis ſo likewiſe in the evangelical negociations; if we put out much upon ſcore of conſcience or charity, we ſhall be ſure to profit much. Liberality is the moſt beneficial traffick that can be; it is bringing our wares to the beſt market; it is letting out our money into the beſt hands; we thereby lend our money to God, who repays with vaſt uſury; an hundred to one is the rate he allows at preſent, and above a hundred millions to one he will render hereafter; ſo that if you will be merchants this way, you ſhall be ſure to thrive, you cannot fail to grow rich moſt eaſily and ſpeedily: *The liberal ſoul ſhall be made fat, and he that watereth, ſhall be watered himſelf:* this is that which St. Paul again argues upon, when, commending the Philippians' free kindneſs toward him, he ſays, *Not becauſe I deſire a gift, but I deſire fruit that may abound to your account.* Bounty yields καρπὸν πλεονάζοντα, a fruit that multiplies, and abundantly turns to good account; it indeed procuring God's benediction, the fountain of all deſirable plenty and proſperity; for, *The bleſſing of the Lord it maketh rich, and he addeth no ſorrow with it.* It is therefore the greateſt want of policy, the worſt ill-huſbandry and unthriftineſs that can be, to be ſparing this way; he that uſeth it cannot be thriving; he muſt ſpend upon the main ſtock, and may be ſure to get nothing conſiderable. God ordinarily ſo proceeds, as to recompenſe and retaliate men in the ſame kind, wherein they endeavour to pleaſe him, or preſume to offend him; ſo that for them who freely offer him their goods, he in regard thereto will proſper their dealings, and bleſs their eſtates: (*For this very thing the Lord thy God ſhall bleſs thee in all thy works, and in all that thou putteſt thine hand unto*, ſays Moſes:) but they

Prov. xi. 25.

Phil. iv. 17.

Prov. x. 22.

Deut. xv. 18.

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SERM. XXII. who will not lay out any thing for him, he will not concern himself in their success otherwise than to cross it, or, which is worse, to curse it: for if he seem to favour them for a time with some prosperity in their affairs, their condition is much worse thereby, their account will be more grievous, and their fate more disastrous in the end.

Ps. lxxiii. 17.

5. Farther, the contributing part of our goods to the poor will qualify us to enjoy the rest with satisfaction and comfort. The oblation of these first-fruits, as it will sanctify the whole lump of our estate, so it will sweeten it; having offered this well-pleasing sacrifice of piety, having discharged this debt of justice, having paid this tribute of gratitude, our hearts being at rest, and our conscience well satisfied, we shall, like those good people in the Acts, *eat our meat with gladness, and singleness of heart*; to see the poor man by our means accommodated, eased, and refreshed, will give a delicious relish to all our enjoyments. But withholding his portion from the poor, as it will pollute and profane all our estate, so it will render the fruition thereof sour or unsavoury to us: for can we with any content taste our dainties, or view our plenties, while the poor man stands in sight pining with hunger[o]? Can we without great regret see our walls clothed with tapestry, our horses decked with golden trappings, our attendants strutting in wanton gaiety, while our honest poor brother appears half naked, and trembling with cold? Can we carry on one finger enough to furnish ten poor people with necessaries; and have the heart within us, without shame and displeasure, to see them want? No; the sense of our impiety and ingratitude toward God, of our inhumanity and unworthiness toward our neighbour, will not fail (if ever we considerately

Acts ii. 46.

[o] Ἐγγὺς ὁ πένης, εἰς τοῦτον ἀπέρευξαί τι τῶν περιττῶν· τί γὰρ σὺ κάμινος ἀπείρατον, καὶ ὅτῳ πειθῶν, καὶ σὺ κρανιπαλῶν, καὶ ὅτῳ ὑδερικῶν, καὶ σὺ κάρφ βαρύνων, καὶ ὅτῳ περιτρεπόμενον νόσῳ; *Naxian. Orat.* 27.

reflect

reflect on our behaviour) to sting us with cruel re- SERM.
morse and self-condemnation; the clamours of want XXII.
and misery surrounding us, will pierce our ears, and
wound our hearts; the frequent objects of pity and mercy, do what we can to banish them from our prospect or regard, will so assail, and so pursue us, as to disturb the freedom of our enjoyments, to quash the briskness of our mirth, to allay the sweetness of our pleasure; yea, rather, if stupidity and obduration have not seized on us, to imbitter all unto us, we shall feel that true, which Zophar speaks of the cruel and covetous oppressor, *Surely he shall not feel* Job xx. 18, *quietness in his belly,—he shall not rejoice in his substance,* 20, 21. *—in the fulness of his sufficiency he shall be in straights.*

6. I shall touch but one consideration more, persuasive of this practice; it is this: The peculiar nature of our religion specially requires it, and the honour thereof exacts it from us; nothing better suits Christianity, nothing more graces it, than liberality; nothing is more inconsistent therewith, or more disparageth it, than being miserable and sordid. A Christian niggard is the veriest nonsense that can be; for what is a Christian? what, but a man, who adores God alone, who loves God above all things, who reposes all his trust and confidence in God? What is he, but one who undertaketh to imitate the most good and bountiful God; to follow, as the best pattern of his practice, the most benign and charitable JESUS, the Son of God; to obey the laws of God, and his Christ, the sum and substance of which is charity; half whose religion doth consist in loving his neighbour as himself? What is he, farther, but one who hath renounced this world, with all the vain pomps and pleasures of it; who professes himself in disposition and affection of mind to forsake all things for Christ's sake; who pretends little to value, affect, or care for any thing under heaven; having all his main concernments and treasures, his heart, his hopes, and his happiness, in another world? Such is a Chris-

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Christian. And what is a niggard? All things quite contrary: one, whose practice manifestly shews him to worship another thing beside, and before God; to love Mammon above God, and more to confide in it, than in him; one who bears small good-will, kindness, or pity toward his brother; who is little affected or concerned with things future or celestial; whose mind and heart are rivetted to this world; whose hopes and happinesses are settled here below; whose soul is deeply immersed and buried in earth; one who, according to constant habit, notoriously breaketh the two great heads of Christian duty, *Loving God with all his heart, and his neighbour as himself*; it is therefore, by comparing those things, very plain, that we pretend to reconcile gross contradictions and inconsistencies, if we profess ourselves to be Christians, and are illiberal. It is indeed the special grace and glory of our religion, that it consisteth not in barren speculations, or empty formalities, or forward professions; not in fancying curiously, or speaking zealously, or looking demurely; but in really producing sensible fruits of goodness; in doing, as St. Paul signifies, *things good and profitable unto men*, such as those chiefly are, of which we speak. The most gracious wisdom of God hath so modelled our religion, that according to it piety and charity are the same thing; that we can never express ourselves more dutiful toward him, or better please him, or more truly glorify him, than when we are kind and good to our poor brother. We grossly mistake, if we take giving of alms to be a Jewish or Popish practice, suitable to children and dullards in religion, beneath so refined, so improved, so loftily spiritual gallants as we: no, 'tis a duty most properly and most highly Christian, as none more, a most goodly fruit of grace, and a most faithful mark thereof: *By the experiment of this ministration, we*, as St. Paul saith, *glorify God for our professed subjection unto the Gospel of Christ, and for our liberal distribution unto our bre-*

Tit. iii. 8.

2 Cor. ix. 13.

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brethren, and unto all men: without it our faith is dead and senseless, our high attainments are fond presumptions, our fine notions and delicate spiritualities are in truth but silly dreams, the issues of a proud and ignorant fancy: he that appears hard-hearted and close-fisted towards his needy brother, let him think or call himself what he pleaseth, he plainly is no Christian, but a blemish, a reproach, and a scandal to that honourable name.

7. To all these considerations and reasons inducing to the practice of this kind of charity, I might subjoin examples, and set before you the fairest copies that can be imagined thereof. We have for it the pattern of God himself, who is infinitely munificent and merciful; *from whom every good and perfect gift descendeth; who giveth life, and breath, and all things unto all*; who *giveth liberally, and upbraideth not.* We have the example of the Son of God, who out of pure charity did freely part with the riches and glories of eternity, voluntarily embracing extreme poverty and want for our sake, that we who were poor might be enriched, we that were miserable might become happy; who *went about doing good*, spent all his life in painful dispensation of beneficence, and relieving the needs of men in every kind. We have the blessed Patriarchs to follow, who at God's pleasure and call did readily leave their country, their friends, their goods, and all they had. We have the practice of the holy Apostles, who freely *let go all to follow their Lord*; who cheerfully sustained all sorts of losses, disgraces, and pains, for promoting the honour of God, and procuring good unto men: we have to move and encourage us hereto the first and best Christians, most full of grace and holy zeal, who *so many as were possessors of lands and houses, did sell them*, and did impart the price of them to the community, *so that there was none poor among them*, and that *distribution was made to every one as he had need.* We have all the saints and eminent servants

Jam. i. 5. Acts xvii. 17. 25. 2 Cor. viii. 9. Acts x. 38. Matt. xix. 27. Acts iv. 34, 35.

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servants of God in all times, who have been high and wonderful in the performance of these duties. I could tell you of the blessed martyr St. Cyprian, who was liberal by wholesale, bestowing all at once, a fair estate, on God and the poor; of the renowned bishop St. Basil, who constantly waited on the sick, and kissed their sores; of the most pious confessor St. Martin, who having but one coat left, and seeing a poor man that wanted clothes, tore it in two pieces, and gave one to that *poor man:* and many like instances out of authentic history might be produced, apt to provoke our imitation. I might also, to beget emulation and shame in us, represent exemplary practices of humanity and charity even in Jews, Mahometans, and Pagans, (such as in these cold days might pass for more than ordinary among us;) but I shall only propound one present and sensible example; that of this noble city, whose public bounty and charity in all kinds (in education of orphans, in curing the diseased both in body and mind, in provision for the poor, in relieving all sorts of necessities and miseries) let me earnestly entreat and exhort us all for God's sake, as we are able, by our private charity to imitate, to encourage, and to assist; let us do this so much the more willingly and freely, as the sad circumstances of things, by God's judgments brought upon us, do plainly require, that the public charity itself (lying under so great impediments, discouragements, and distresses) should be supported, supplied, and relieved by particular liberality. No words that I can devise will be so apt to affect and move you, as the case itself, if you please to consider it: hear it therefore speaking, and, I pray, with a pious and charitable disposition of mind attend thereto:

Pontius in vit. Cypr. Greg. Naz. Orat. 40. Sulp. Sever.

A true report, &c.

For this excellent pattern of pious bounty and mercy, let us heartily thank Almighty God: let us humbly implore God's blessing on the future management

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nagement of it; let us pay due reſpects to the wor- SERM.
thy promoters thereof, and pray for rewards upon XXII.
them, anſwerable to their charitable care and induſ-
try employed therein; let us alſo according to our ability perform our duty in following and furthering it: for encouragement to which practice, give me leave briefly to reflect upon the latter part of my text; which repreſents ſome inſtances of the felicity proper to a bountiful perſon, or ſome rewards peculiar to the exerciſing the duties of bounty and mercy.

The firſt is, *His righteouſneſs endureth for ever.* Theſe words are capable of various ſenſes, or of divers reſpects; they may import, that the fame and remembrance of his bounty is very durable, or that the effects thereof do laſtingly continue, or that eternal rewards are deſigned thereto; they may reſpect the bountiful man himſelf, or his poſterity here; they may ſimply relate to an endurance in God's regard and care; or they may with that alſo comprehend a continuance in the good memory and honourable mention of men. Now in truth, according to all theſe interpretations, the bountiful man's righteouſneſs doth endure for ever, that is, very laſtingly, (or ſo long as the ſpecial nature of the caſe doth bear) in any ſenſe; or for an abſolute perpetuity in ſome ſenſe: the words in their plenitude do naturally and without ſtraining involve ſo many truths; none of which therefore we think fit to exclude, but ſhall briefly touch them all.

1. As for future reputation and fame, (which that it in part is intended here, that which precedes, *The righteous ſhall be had in everlaſting remembrance*, doth argue) it is evident, that it peculiarly attends upon this practice: the bountiful perſon is eſpecially that *juſt* man, whoſe *memory is bleſſed*, (ἡ μετ' ἐγκωμίων, Prov. x. 7.
as the Greek renders it; that is, is proſecuted with commendations and praiſes.) No ſpices can ſo embalm a man, no monument can ſo preſerve his name and memory, as works of beneficence; no other fame

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fame is comparably ſo precious, or truly glorious, as that which grows from thence: the renown of power and proweſs, of wit or learning, of any wiſdom or ſkill, may dwell in the fancies of men with ſome admiration: but the remembrance of bounty reigns in their hearts with cordial eſteem and affection; there erecting immoveable trophies over death and oblivion, and thence ſpreading itſelf through the tongues of men with ſincere and ſprightly commendations. The bountiful man's very duſt is fragrant, and his grave venerable; his name is never mentioned without reſpect; his actions have always theſe beſt echoes, with innumerable iterations reſounding after them: *His goods ſhall be eſtabliſhed, and the congregation ſhall declare his alms.* Ecclus. xxxii. 11. This was a true friend to mankind; this was a real benefactor to the world; this was a man good in earneſt, and pious to good purpoſe.

2. The effects of his righteouſneſs are likewiſe very durable: when he is departed hence, and in perſon is no more ſeen, he remains viſible and ſenſible in the footſteps and fruits of his goodneſs; the poor ſtill beholds him preſent in the ſubſiſtence of himſelf, and his family; the ſick man feels him in the refreſhment, which he yet enjoys by his proviſion; he ſupervives in the heart of the afflicted, which ſtill reſents the comfort, and rejoices in the eaſe, which he procured him; all the world derives benefit from him by the edification it receiveth from his example; religion obtaineth profit and ornament, God himſelf enjoyeth glory and praiſe from his righteouſneſs.

3. His righteouſneſs alſo endureth in reſpect to his poſterity. It is an uſual plea for tenacity and parſimony, that care muſt be had of poſterity, that enough muſt be provided and laid up for the family: but in truth this is a very abſurd excuſe; and doing according thereto, is a very prepoſterous method of proceeding toward that end; it is really the greateſt im-

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improvidence in that reſpect, and the trueſt neglect that can be of our children: for ſo doing, together with a ſeeming eſtate, we entail a real curſe upon them; we diveſt them of God's protection and benediction, (the only ſure preſervatives of an eſtate) we leave them heirs of nothing ſo much as of puniſhments due to our ingratitude, our infidelity, our impiety and injuſtice both toward God and man: whereas by liberally beſtowing on the poor, we demiſe unto them God's bleſſing, which is the beſt inheritance; we recommend them to God's ſpecial care, which is the beſt tuition; we leave them God's protection and providence, which are a wealth indefectible and inexhauſtible; we conſtitute God their guardian, who will moſt faithfully manage, and moſt wiſely improve their ſubſtance, both that which we leave to them, and that which we gave for them to the poor; we thereby in good part entitle them to the rewards appropriate to our pious charity, our faith, our gratitude, our ſelf-denial, our juſtice, to whatever of good is virtually contained in our acts of bounty; to omit the honour and good-will of men, which conſtantly adhere to the bountiful man's houſe and family. Prov. xiii. 22. *A good man leaveth an inheritance to his children's children.* It is therefore expreſsly mentioned in Scripture as a recompence peculiar to this virtue, that ſecurity from want and all happineſs do attend the poſterity of the bountiful perſon: *He is ever merciful and lendeth, and his ſeed is bleſſed*, ſaith David of him generally: and David alſo particularly obſerved, that in all the courſe of his long life, he could find no exception to the rule: *I have been young, and now am old; yet have I not ſeen the righteous forſaken, nor his ſeed begging their bread.*

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Pſ. xxxvii. 26.

Pſ. xxxvii. 25.

4. His righteouſneſs alſo endureth for ever in the perpetual favour of God, and in the eternal rewards which God will confer upon him, who, out of conſcience and reverence toward God, out of good-will and kindneſs toward his brother, hath diſperſed, and given

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given to the poor. *God will not*, as the Apoſtle ſaith, *be unjuſt to forget his labour of charity in miniſtering* to his poor brother: from the ſeed which he *hath ſown to the Spirit*, he ſhall aſſuredly reap a moſt plentiful crop of bleſſings ſpiritual; he ſhall effectually enjoy *the good foundation* that he hath *ſtored up*: for the goods he hath ſold and delivered, he ſhall *bona fide* receive his bargain, *the hidden treaſure* and *precious pearl* of eternal life; for this beſt improvement of his talent of worldly riches, he ſhall hear the *Euge bone ſerve, Well done, good and faithful ſervant, enter into thy maſter's joy*: he ſhall at laſt find God infinitely more bountiful to him, than he hath been unto the poor.

Heb. vi. 10. Gal. vi. 8. 1 Tim. vi. 19. Matt. xiii. 46. Matt. xxv. 21. 26.

Thus when all the flaſhes of ſenſual pleaſure are quite extinct; when all the flowers of ſecular glory are withered away; when all earthly treaſures are buried in darkneſs; when this world, and all the faſhion of it, are utterly vaniſhed and gone, the bountiful man's ſtate will be ſtill firm and flouriſhing, and *His righteouſneſs ſhall endure for ever*.

It follows, *His horn ſhall be exalted with honour*. A horn is an emblem of power; for in it the beaſts' ſtrength, offenſive and defenſive, doth conſiſt; and of plenty, for it hath within it a capacity apt to contain what is put into it; and of ſanctity, for that in it was put the holy oil, with which kings were conſecrated; and of dignity, both in conſequence upon the reaſons mentioned, (as denoting might, and influence, and ſacredneſs accompanying ſovereign dignity,) and becauſe alſo it is an eſpecial beauty and ornament to the creature which hath it; ſo that this expreſſion (*His horn ſhall be exalted with honour*) may be ſuppoſed to import, that an abundance of high and holy, of firm and ſolid honour ſhall attend upon the bountiful perſon. And that ſo it truly ſhall, may from many conſiderations appear.

1 Sam. xvi. 13. 1 Kings i. 39.

1. Honour is inſeparably annexed thereto, as its natural companion and ſhadow. God hath impreſſed

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preſſed upon all virtue a majeſty and a beauty, which do command reſpect, and with a kindly violence extort veneration from men: ſuch is the natural conſtitution of our ſouls, that as our ſenſe neceſſarily liketh what is fair and ſweet, ſo our mind unavoidably will eſteem what is virtuous and worthy; all good actions as ſuch are honourable: but of all virtues beneficence doth with moſt unqueſtionable right claim honour, and with irreſiſtible force procures it; as it is indeed the moſt divine of virtues, ſo men are moſt apt to venerate them, whom they obſerve eminently to practiſe it. Other virtues men ſee, and approve as goodly to the ſight; but this they taſte and feel; this by moſt ſenſible experience they find to be pleaſant and profitable, and cannot therefore but highly prize it. They, who *do their alms before men*, although out of an unworthy vain-glorious deſign, *have* yet, as our Saviour intimates, *their reward*; they fail not to get honour thereby; and even ſo have no bad pennyworth: for, in the Wiſe Man's judgment, *A good name is rather to be choſen than great riches*; they receive at leaſt fine air, for groſs earth; and things very ſpiritual, for things moſt material; they obtain that which every man doth naturally deſire and prize, for that which only faſhion in ſome places endeareth and commendeth: they get the end for the means; for ſcarce any man ſeeketh wealth for itſelf, but either for honour, or for virtue's ſake, that he may live creditably, or may do good therewith: neceſſity is ſerved with a little, pleaſure may be ſatisfied with a competence; abundance is required only to ſupport honour, or promote good; and honour by a natural connection adhereth to bounty. *He that followeth after righteouſneſs and mercy, findeth life, righteouſneſs, and honour.* Prov. xxi. 21.

φιλοῦνται σχεδὸν μάλιστα οἱ ἐλευθέριοι τῶν ἀπ' ἀρετῆς, ὠφέλιμοι γάρ. *Ariſt.* Matt. vi. 1.

Prov. xxii. 1.

Αἱ γὰρ δυνάστειαι καὶ ὁ πλοῦτος διὰ τὴν τιμὴν ἔχειν αἱρετά. *Ariſt.*

2. But farther, an acceſſion of honour, according to gracious promiſe, (grounded upon ſomewhat of ſpecial reaſon, of equity and decency in the thing itſelf)

SERM. XXII. itself) is due from God unto the bountiful person, and is by special providence surely conferred on him. There is no kind of piety, or instance of obedience, whereby God himself is more signally honoured, than by this. These are chiefly those *good works*, the which *men seeing*, are apt to *glorify our Father which is in heaven.* Phil. i. 11. *Being filled with the fruits of righteousness, which are by Christ Jesus, to the glory and praise of God.* To these fruits that is most applicable which our Lord saith, *Hereby is my Father glorified, if ye bear much fruit:* for, as *He that oppresseth the poor, reproacheth his Maker*; so *he honoureth him, that hath mercy on the poor.* The comfortable experience of good in this sort of actions will most readily dispose men to admire and commend the excellency, the wisdom, the goodness of the divine laws, will therefore procure God hearty praise and thanks for them: for, as St. Paul teacheth us, *The administration of this service not only supplieth the want of the saints, but is abundant also by many thanksgivings unto God; whilst by experiment of this ministration, they glorify God for your professed subjection unto the Gospel of Christ, and for your liberal distribution unto them, and unto all men.* Since then God is so peculiarly honoured by this practice, it is but equal and fit, that God should remunerate it with honour: God's noble goodness will not let him seem defective in any sort of beneficial correspondence toward us; we shall never be able to yield him any kind of good thing in duty, which he will not be more apt to render us in grace; they who, as Solomon speaketh, *honour God with their substance*, shall by God certainly be honoured with his blessing: reason intimates so much, and we beside have God's express word for it: *Them*, saith he, *who honour me, I will honour.* He that absolutely and independently is the fountain of all honour, *from whom*, as good king David saith, *riches and honour cometh*, for that *he reigneth over all*, he will assuredly prefer and dignify those, who have been

Matt. v. 16.

John xv. 8.

Prov. xiv. 31.

2 Cor. ix. 12, 13.

Prov. iii. 9.

1 Sam. ii. 30.

1 Chron. xxix. 12.

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been at ſpecial care and coſt to advance his honour. He that hath the *hearts of all men in his hands*, and *faſhioneth them* as he pleaſeth, will raiſe the bountiful man in the judgments and affections of men. He that ordereth all the events of things, and diſpoſeth ſucceſs as he thinks fit, will cauſe the bountiful perſon's enterpriſes to proſper, and come off with credit. He will not ſuffer the reputation of ſo real an honourer of himſelf to be extremely ſlurred by diſaſter, to be blaſted by ſlander, to be ſupplanted by envy or malice; but will *bring forth his righteouſneſs as the light, and his judgment as the noon-day.* SERM. XXII. Prov. xxi. 1. Pſ. xxxiii. 15. Pſ. xxxvii. 6.

3. God will thus exalt the bountiful man's horn even here in this world, and to an infinitely higher pitch he will advance it in the future ſtate: he ſhall there be ſet at the right hand, in a moſt honourable place and rank, among the chief friends and favourites of the heavenly King, in happy conſortſhip with the holy angels and bleſſed ſaints; where, in recompence of his pious bounty, he ſhall, from the bountiful hands of his moſt gracious Lord, receive *an incorruptible crown of righteouſneſs*, and *an unfading crown of glory*. The which God of his infinite mercy grant unto us all, through Jeſus Chriſt our Lord; to whom for ever be all praiſe. Amen.

Now, the God of peace, that brought again from the dead our Lord Jeſus, that great Shepherd of the ſheep, through the blood of the everlaſting covenant, make us perfect in every good work to do his will, working in us that which is well-pleaſing in his ſight, through Jeſus Chriſt: to whom be glory for ever and ever. Amen. Heb. xiii. 20, 12.

FINIS.

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